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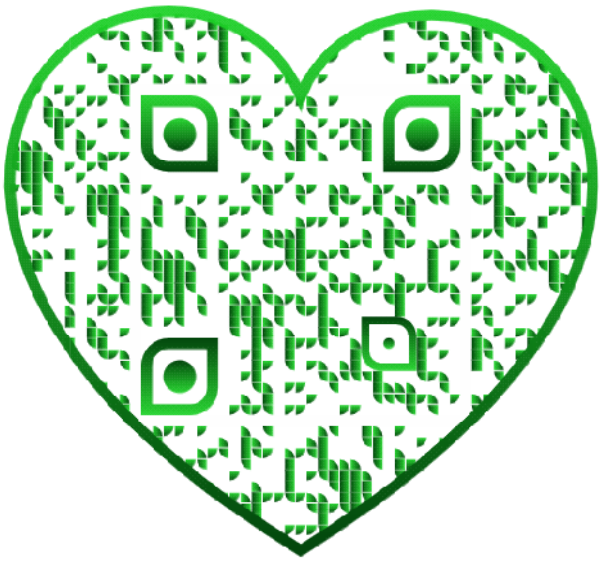

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THE BIG PICTURE

The MGB is a classless classic, from a pub-meet staple to a steed for Stirling Moss on the Pirelli Classic Marathon in 1990. The 60-year-old was recovering from a scooter accident, but that didn't hold him back as he faced Clay Regazzoni, Bobby Unser, Gijs van Lennep and Roger Clark – plus a gaggle of amateurs. Paddy Hopkirk/Alec Poole won in a Mini, with Moss and co-pilot Chuck Shields third behind Ron Gammons/Paul Easter in another MG. Can the B be bettered? Turn to p74 to find out. **AC**

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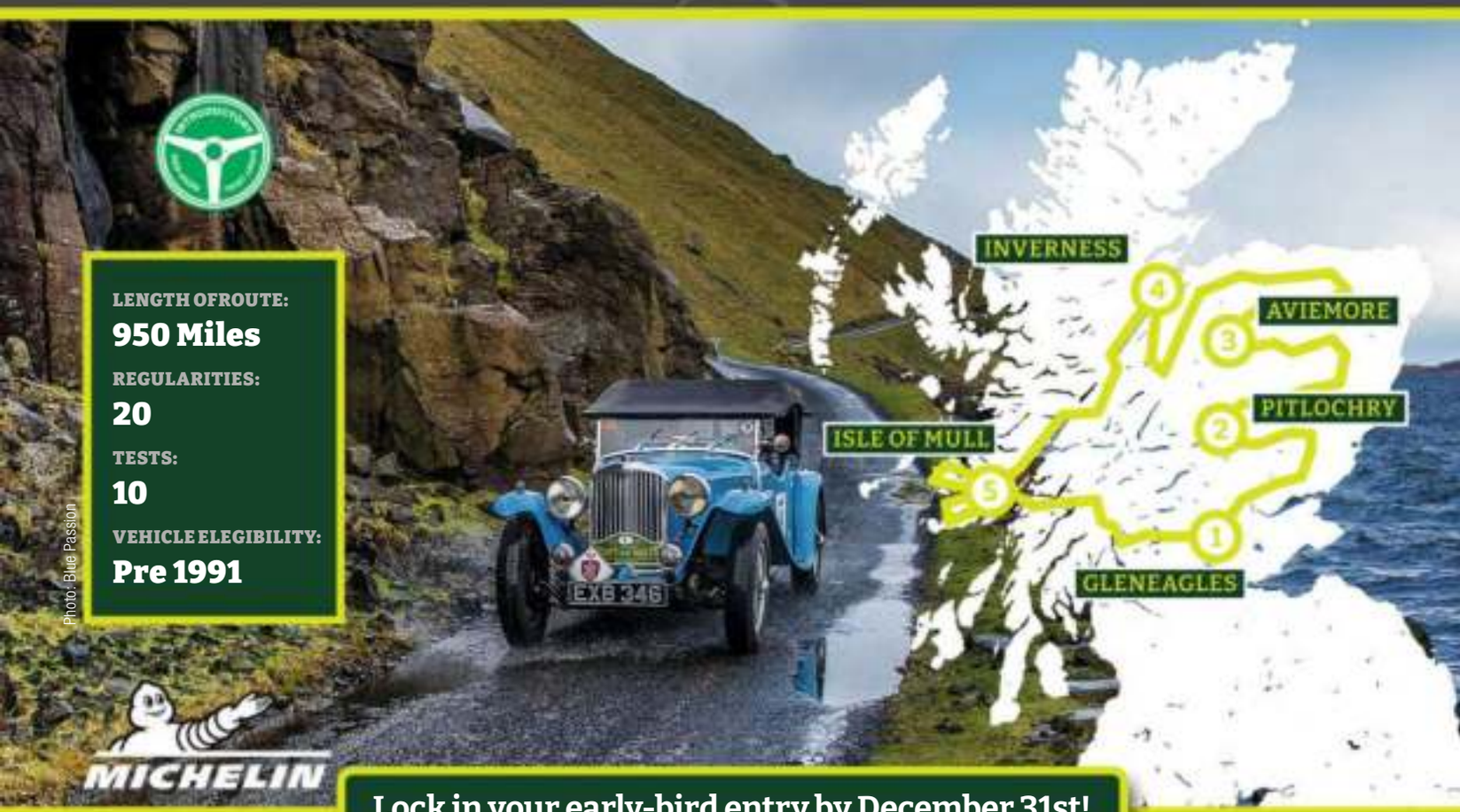

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Welcome

Last year I was unable to make the Classic Motor Show at the NEC due to family commitments, but I wasn't about to miss two years in a row. I always find this a life-affirming event, and walking the halls this year gave a particular thrill. Not so much for the wide variety of cars, they are a given (turn to p14 for more about them), but for the atmosphere and the people. Meeting up with old friends is a pleasure, yet the really exciting thing for someone who frets about the future of our hobby was spotting all the new enthusiast organisations I hadn't come across before and, even more importantly, seeing so many young and varied faces turning out to support their clubs.

For the 40th anniversary of this annual event, the organisers managed to tempt a record turnout of clubs at an amazing 338, with newcomers including Auto Anonymous, the Women Drivers' Social Club and Nordik Rides, plus youngsters catered for by the likes of the Young Retro Motor Club, The NSRA Pre29 Members, TR Register Youth or the Morris Minor Owners' Club Young Members.

In that spirit of a changing of the guard, this month we have dared to question a sacred cow. As a huge fan of the MGB, for so long seen as the obvious classic choice, I tasked the team with finding me an alternative to my beloved Abingdon icon (see p74). We have rated each of their offerings, but decided not to give a verdict because we'd love to hear your views on who got closest to the mark – and to learn which of your own choices we should have included.

ALASTAIR CLEMENTS
Editor in chief, *Classic & Sports Car*

Turn to p144 for further details

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Editorial 020 8267 5399
Subscriptions 01604 251452
Web classicandsportscar.com
Facebook @candscmagazine
Instagram @classicandsportscar
X @CandSCmagazine
Threads @classicandsportscar
TikTok @candscmagazine

EDITORIAL
EDITOR IN CHIEF Alastair Clements *alastair.clements@haymarket.com*
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Lizzie Pope *lizzie.pope@haymarket.com*
DEPUTY EDITOR Aaron McKay *aaron.mckay@haymarket.com*
FEATURES EDITOR Charlie Calderwood *charlie.calderwood@haymarket.com*
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Ryan Standen *ryan.standen@haymarket.com*
ART EDITOR Damon Cogman *damon.cogman@haymarket.com*
SENIOR DESIGNER Mei Hau *mei.hau@haymarket.com*
CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER John Bradshaw *john.bradshaw@haymarket.com*
SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER Max Edleston
PHOTOGRAPHERS James Mann, Jack Harrison
EDITOR AT LARGE Simon Taylor *simontaylor@stoveboltspecial.com*
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR Mick Walsh
SENIOR CONTRIBUTORS Martin Buckley, Julian Balme, Paul Hardiman, Simon Hucknall, Jon Pressnell
CONTRIBUTORS Michael Ware, Malcolm McKay, Tim Dickson, David Whale, Mario Laguna, Dale Keller, James Page, Joel Araújo, Nigel Boothman, Martin Port, Richard Heseltine, Richard Dredge

SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK TEL 03448 488807
OVERSEAS TEL +44 (0)1604 251452 **USA TEL** 001 877 531 1767
EMAIL help@classicandsportscar.themagazineshop.com

ADVERTISING
EMAIL *ads.csc@haymarket.com* **TEL** 020 8267 5937
HEAD OF CORPORATE SALES Jawade Khan
SALES TEAM Luke Teachen (New Business Development Manager), Nabila Moughal (Display Account Manager), Christian Gidley (Classified Sales Executive)
Advertisements are accepted only upon Haymarket Media Group's standard Terms of Acceptance of Advertising, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department of *Classic & Sports Car*

PRODUCTION
Trevor Simpson (Head of Operations)
Lee Brister (Senior Controller)
TEL 020 8267 5262

PUBLISHING
Isabella McDermid (Newstrade Marketing Manager)
Lance Pereira (Newstrade Marketing Executive)
SYNDICATION ENQUIRIES *simon@foxsyndication.com*

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BACK NUMBERS
TEL 03448 488807 **OVERSEAS TEL** +44 (0)1604 251452
EMAIL help@classicandsportscar.themagazineshop.com

GROUP EDITOR IN CHIEF Steve Cropley
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR Chris Daniels
MANAGING DIRECTOR Rachael Prasher
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Kevin Costello

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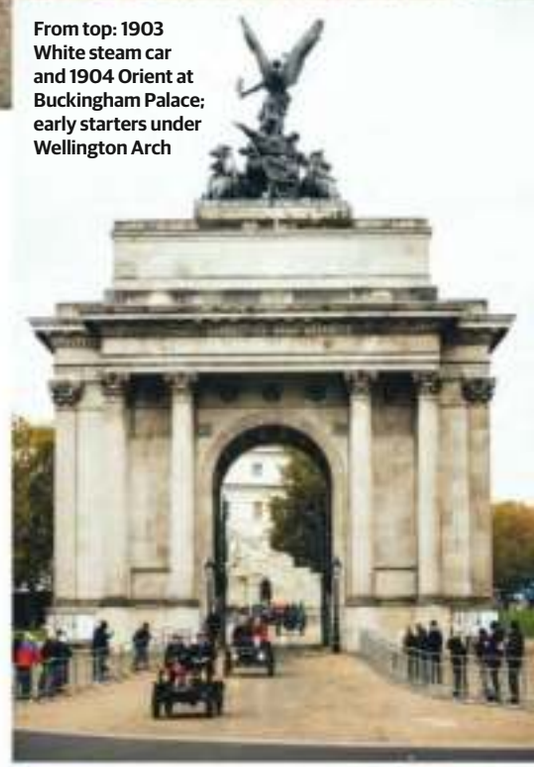
From top: 1903 White steam car and 1904 Orient at Buckingham Palace; early starters under Wellington Arch



STEAMING AHEAD TO THE COAST

Veterans motor from London to Brighton with special anniversaries marking this year's commemorative run

WORDS **SIMON HUCKNALL** PHOTOGRAPHY **JACK HARRISON/JAMES BEARNE/ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB**

The 2024 London to Brighton Veteran Car Run was something of a red-letter event, marking the 125th anniversaries of Fiat and Renault, as well as 120 years of the Ladies' Automobile Club, with around 50 of the 369 cars starting at Hyde Park piloted by female drivers. The Run, held this time on 3 November, hosted one of its most powerful motor cars ever – a 1907 9.2-litre Fiat Grand Prix racer – and its most valuable, a 1903 Mercedes-Simplex recently sold for a World Record price.

After the ceremonial ripping of the red flag, which until 1896 had symbolised the punitive 4mph speed limit for automobiles on British roads, the world's longest-running motoring event was under way in uncharacteristically mild and dry conditions, which continued down to Brighton.

A small number of ancient bicycles led the pack, many built by companies such as Humber, Rover and Sunbeam before they had found a four-wheeled footing. But one of the first cars over the startline was the oldest of the eligible pre-1905 vehicles, an 1894 single-cylinder Benz 1½hp, driven by Hermann Layher.

Duncan Pittaway's ever-popular 1896 Salvesen steam cart, hissing its way past the flag, was another early starter on the 60-mile jaunt, this year fuelled by 'e-coal' made from a potent combination of olives, coffee and molasses.

Among more than 100 marques represented this year, De Dion-Boutons were the most prolific, with around 50 joining the veteran field through the Wellington Arch, the Run's first landmark. Passing by Buckingham Palace and over the Westminster Bridge, vehicles then took one of two routes (to avoid congestion) before merging again just north of Croydon.

An increasingly car-sceptical capital London may be, but the Veteran Car Run is not only a truly remarkable spectacle, but also a great leveller, and crowds of all ages were out in force in the early-morning gloom to flag, wave and cheer the intrepid drivers as they headed for the coast.

By the halfway refreshment stop at Crawley, there had been surprisingly few drop-outs, and most drivers were keenly looking forward to the hilly challenges of the South Downs ahead of them. *Autocar*'s Matt Prior and Steve Cropley had borrowed the British Motor Museum's 1902 8hp Albion A1 dog-cart, its name derived from the space under the seat of a horse-drawn carriage where dogs travelled, which housed the engine when it became motorised. "It's not overly stable," remarked

Run regular 1902 Mors ferries event fan Alan Titchmarsh

Duncan Pittaway shovels 'e-coal' for 1896 Salvesen at Hyde Park departure

Christopher Atkinson's distinctive 1903 Darracq was a hit thanks its crew's period attire. Left: cruising The Mall in autumn colours

Matt, pointing towards its solid tyres, "but it's very plodding. It just chugs along up any hill."

Likewise Mike Dreelan's 1904 White twin-cylinder steam car. Built by the White Sewing Machine Company in Cleveland, Ohio, the car's appearance is dominated by its oversized radiator. Mike said the biggest challenge is constantly balancing the water pressure to avoid damaging the engine: "It will probably get to Brighton on its 30 gallons of water, but I'm going to give it one top-up just to be safe."

Celebrity participants are as important to the Run now as ever. Even in 1953, the film *Genevieve* was instrumental in broadening the event's appeal and bringing what was then a rather eccentric pastime to a more mainstream audience. Television broadcaster and gardener Alan Titchmarsh was riding shotgun in Philip Oldman's 1902 Mors, and has

become a favourite with audiences in the four years he's taken part, despite two of those ending with breakdowns. The Mors' history goes back rather further: the Tonneau-bodied model, with its sophisticated four-cylinder, twin-ignition, eight-plug engine, has entered more than 60 times.

While the event is not a race, arriving early at the Madeira Drive finishing line is, for some, a point of honour. The first to complete it this year was Shane Houlihan in an 1899 Panhard et Levassor, parking below the famous Victorian arches at around 10am, just over three hours after leaving Hyde Park.

Another early Brighton arrival was Rob Walton's 1903 Mercedes-Simplex 60hp Roi-des-Belges. Impressively original, and kept in single-family ownership for 121 years, it had been built for the British publishing magnate Alfred Harmsworth and was the reserve car for the 1903 Gordon Bennett Cup. Taking $12m at Gooding & Co's Amelia Island sale earlier in the year made it the highest price yet paid for a veteran car. Having resided at the National Motor Museum since 1957, the Simplex had not been started since 1971, but, as Rob's co-driver John Bentley explained, after some remedial work, including a new carburettor, it fired up after just six cranks. With a 9.2-litre 'four', it was good for 80mph, making it, said Rob: "the supercar of its day."

A special invite was accorded the 1907 Fiat Grand Prix 130hp. Below: Madeira Drive finish

Arriving in Brighton shortly after 11am, Georgina Ward and Meg Edwards' 1901 Decauville 8½hp was the first vehicle with an all-female crew to finish. Passionate about bringing the joys of veteran motoring to a younger audience (both women are aged under 30), their enthusiasm was palpable, and not dented by some emergency brake adjustments on Westminster Bridge.

Another narrowly averted drama became apparent when John Worth, accompanied by three fittingly attired passengers, reversed his Tonneau-bodied 1900 Daimler Type A 6hp into a space below Madeira Drive's arches. Only then did John spot a three-inch section of solid rubber missing from his tyre, with the bare wheel rim exposed. This was his 18th Run with the Daimler, and the 59th for the car, and it will be sure to return in 2025.

Celebrating manufacturer Fiat's 125th anniversary was surely the most omnipotent car the event has ever hosted. An invitational entry, due to many of its components dating from 1905-'07, the Fiat 130hp Corsa Grand Prix car was a veritable fire-breather, powered by a 16.2-litre 'four' and in its day good for a 124mph maximum. The car's chassis harks from 1904, but Fiat gradually developed the model for competition, entering it in the 1907 French Grand Prix where it won in the hands of Felice Nazzaro, who averaged 70mph during the race. In 1956, funded by Fiat, it was purchased and restored by Turin's Museo Nazionale dell' Automobile, which entered the car in this year's veteran event, having recently recommissioned it as part of a three-year-long conservation project. "The engine was producing so much torque at 1000rpm," said Davide Lorenzone, museum curator and the driver to Brighton, "that it broke the test bench. We now only run it at a maximum of 800rpm."

The 2024 London to Brighton Veteran Car Run was a fitting climax to the Royal Automobile Club's London Motor Week, which had hosted an Art of Motoring exhibition, motoring lectures, and a sale from sponsor RM Sotheby's at The Peninsula London hotel. The St James's Motoring Spectacle filled Pall Mall with veterans on the day before the Run, too (p16). Pleasingly, 325 of the 369 cars that departed Hyde Park on this murky Sunday made it to the finish.

THE *C&SC* LONDON TO BRIGHTON FAVOURITES

1900 NEW ORLEANS

Imogen Edwards, at 17 years old, had only just received her provisional driving licence when dad Paul encouraged her to take the wheel of his 1900 New Orleans on this year's Run. Immy's grandfather bought the car in 1952 for £30, and Paul has taken it on every London to Brighton Run since 2000. As Immy admitted: "It's very different to a normal car." And it was the only veteran this year sporting an L-plate.

1899 DE DION-BOUTON 1¾HP

Despite suffering a suspected blown valve, the diminutive De Dion was this year's 11th finisher at Madeira Drive. The immaculately turned-out three-wheeler machine, owned by Clive Pettit, is powered by a single-cylinder engine that delivers two-speed drive to the rear wheels via a chain. "It'll do 27.6mph," said driver Harry Johnson, "and it won its class at Montlhéry's Vintage Revival earlier this year."

1902 NAPIER 12HP

Buoyed by this year's 120th-anniversary celebration of the Ladies' Automobile Club, Elinor Boothman found a 1902 clothing pattern matching the year in which her Napier 12hp was built, adding extra style for her ninth London to Brighton Run. With four forward gears, the mighty four-seater Napier never needs to shed passengers, even on the steepest gradients. "It's a matter of pride that you don't," she said.

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quality is our style

Right: *Wheeler Dealers'* Mike Brewer was on hand to reward Pride of Ownership winner Richard Stacey for his 1967 Ford Mustang

Aston 'spy car' with the AMOC. Right: unique XJ40 estate on loan from Jaguar Heritage

HEROES RETURN TO THE NEC

Star cars and showstoppers from the past were the focus of the 40th Classic Motor Show, which drew 71,520 visitors to Birmingham's NEC from 8-10 November, with Hall of Fame the event theme.

The Singer Owners' Club stand fulfilled the brief most literally, displaying the same two cars – a pair of Singer Nines – that it did at the very first CMS in 1984.

Unveiling a 1937 Aston Martin Mk2 with bona fide espionage credentials, the Aston Martin Owners' Club focused on the car's historical impact. The intriguing Mk2 was used by its original owner to gather intelligence on Germany's war preparations in the late '30s, and had its exhaust note and front grille modified to impersonate a German vehicle, allowing it to pass through border checkpoints at night.

The Historic Marathon Rally Group created a reunion long in the making, commemorating 50 years of the Triumph Dolomite Sprint in competition by gathering two of the most storied motorsport Dollies of all. Brian Culcheth and Ray Hutton's winning 1975 RAC Rally works team car sat alongside the Broadspeed Dolomite in which Tony Dron competed in the 1974 24 Hours of Spa. The previous time the two competitors are thought to have been seen together was at the 1974 Tour of Britain.

Joining the sporting inspiration were the Jaguar Drivers' Club, which brought along the XJR-5 that won the 1985 Road Atlanta 500km, and the Sunbeam Tiger Club, with a display including one of Rootes competition legend Peter Procter's Tiger racers.

Key designers from the history of the Triumph TR were celebrated by the TR Register, meanwhile, with a car on display from the pen of each stylist that worked on the sports car series. A Swallow Doretti was the real rarity, showcasing Frank Rainbow's talents, while a Triumph Italia represented Giovanni Michelotti's prolific work for Triumph.

Elsewhere, the MR2 Drivers' Club displayed a first- and last-year model of each generation of the Toyota middie, the Bugatti Owners' Club brought an amazing six Type 35s, and the Rover 200 & 400 Owners' Club had all seven body shapes of the 'R8' – a group the club believes has not been gathered since 1995, if at all.

Capri Club International produced an imaginative display featuring all generations

Left: Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum's Vauxhall Astra B British Gas van was a surprise draw. Above: '79 Dodge Spacevan is a rare surviving example of a Television Detector unit used for TV licence enforcement

Left: Ford-powered Tornado Talisman was on display with the Fairthorpe Sports Car Club. Below: TR Register showed Triumph-based oddities, here Swallow Doretti leads Italia

Singer Nines were back at the NEC exactly 40 years after their first appearance

Starting a fresh story at the show was the Colt Car Club, a new all-model club for Mitsubishis. Three cars from the firm's early years were on display: a 1976 Colt Galant 1600DL, a 1977 Galant 2000 GTO and a 1979 Lancer GL Auto.

The XJS Club was on hand to celebrate the Jaguar coupé's 50th anniversary with a selection of variants including the very first Lynx Eventer. Not to be outdone, the nearby XJ40 Register had two wagons – one coachbuilt and one factory, the latter produced when Jaguar was investigating the viability of an XJ40 estate. It works beautifully, but was sadly canned due to safety concerns over the siting of the fuel tank (at the back, near the battery). Also marking a 50th anniversary was the Lotus Grand Tourers Club, with four Lotus Elites on its stand.

The winner of the 2024 Pride of Ownership competition was Richard Stacey's '67 Ford Mustang, with showgoers appreciating the superb results of his 3500-hour rebuild, while Andy Nash's '58 Fiat 500N took victory in the Meguiar's Club Showcase concours.

THE *C&SC* NEC FAVOURITES

1974 FORD ESCORT RS 1600

Causing a stir in Hall 8 was Ford AVO Owners' Club RS 1600 registrar William Arnold's barn-find Escort. As well as having an alloy-block BDA motor, it was specified with the Custom Pack and the first owner added bubble arches, Minilites, an uprated engine, Wood & Pickett leather trim with Wilton carpets, and electric windows and sunroof. All of which doubled the £1800 price, but it spent less than 10 years on the road before going into storage. "I'd known about it for seven years," said William, "but the owner wouldn't sell until '23. I'm still working on another so have no plans for it – you can't have too many in bits!" **AC**

1973 MAZDA RX-4

Many are unaware that Mazda built other rotaries beyond the RX-7 and RX-8 – which is fair enough, when there are just three RX-4s on UK roads. In coupé form, as here, it was a rival to the American pony cars, but was also available as a saloon and an estate. The American influence is clear in the exterior styling, but you can see how closely it apes the interiors of Detroit's products, too, with pressed-vinyl trim complete with mock buttons, and that characteristic, paper-thin faux wood on every flat surface. It looked a world apart from the first-generation RX-7 next to it, even though their production runs overlapped briefly. **CC**

Clockwise from top left: wild Fiat Turbina; Alfa F12 tour bus; Fiat 1100 Desirée; Stola Diamante; Alfa SS; ex-Loren B52

Exotic rarities light up Bologna classic spectacular

Billed as the largest historic-vehicle show in Europe, Auto e Moto d'Epoca attracted more than 7000 classic cars, commercial vehicles and motorcycles from 24-27 October.

Showgoers in Bologna were greeted with the 125 Years of Fiat exhibit upon arrival. This expansive area spanned from an 1899 1½hp to the one-off 1954 Turbina from the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile di Torino, via more prosaic fare. Other manufacturer involvement stretched to a large Volkswagen stand celebrating 50 years of the Golf, while Lamborghini Polo Storico displayed a 1968 Miura S in the throes of restoration and a 1994 Diablo SE.

The Automotoclub Storico Italiano pavilion comprised a raft of displays. These honoured 110 years of Maserati and historic hillclimb racers, along with cars boasting cinematic connections – the ex-Sophia Loren, Vignale-bodied Lancia Aurelia B52 and a Triumph TR3A that appeared in *La Dolce Vita* among them. Elsewhere, another major exhibit honoured the V12 engine, with an unusual mix of cars including a Lamborghini LM002 in Leyton House colours, a Ferrari 312B F1 car and a (W12-engined) Bentley Continental GT. The newly inaugurated Museo Moretti Enonsolo displayed a 1500 SS Coupé nearby.

The expanded sales area this year comprised six large halls along with an outdoors area. Here you could conceivably buy anything from a pink Fiat Argenta support vehicle used on the 1984 Giro d'Italia, via a pre-war Horch to a Marcello Gandini-styled Bertone Fiat 850T 'Visitors' Bus'. Judging by the number of '*venduto*' scrawls featuring across windscreens, sales were brisk despite some egregious asking prices.

Veterans take to the streets of London

The Royal Automobile Club's new location for the St James's Motoring Spectacle proved a huge success on 2 November. It had always been the famous club's plan to close Pall Mall and finally, after lengthy negotiations, the dream came true with a superb display that ranged from an Abel horse-drawn removal van to six spectacular hypercars. Fiat and Renault presented a colourful range of classics to celebrate their 125th marque anniversaries, while Volkswagen highlighted the Golf's half century with a set of iconic hatches.

A highlight for many was the chance to get close to an original 007 Aston Martin DB5 (above left), which marked the 50th anniversary of the *Goldfinger* première just a few streets away at Odeon Leicester Square. Complete with all the gadgets, this was one of two produced in 1965 and was brought from Switzerland by Fritz Burkard. Another silver sensation was a factory-built replica of the Mercedes W196 with Monza bodywork.

The most powerful car to enter the London to Brighton Run, the 16-litre 1907 Fiat, attracted major interest. "It's almost impossible to drive slowly, which will be a challenge through London," said Biscaretti museum curator Davide Lorenzone, "but it's a great way to celebrate Fiat's birthday."

The display gave visitors a chance to study the L2B veterans, while a celebrity group judged the concours. Best of Show was Bill Wood's 1901 Panhard, but American Rob Walton's debut with the Mercedes-Simplex 60hp Roi-des-Belges (above) was the talk of the day. This magnificently preserved veteran supercar was last driven by Jim Clark on the '67 Run and deservedly won the Historic Award.

HISTORIAN HONOURED
John Bacchus won this year's Michael Sedgwick Award for his book *The Viking and the Samurai*. He was given the trophy at the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain's Autumn Seminar on 20 October. His book tells the saga of Rover's tie-up with Honda, which he oversaw from 1979-'94.

FORECOURT FORAYS
The MG Owners' Club, Cumbria Classic Car Club, QS Car Club and Glasgow Moggies were among the groups participating in the first Gulf Road Trip. On different days from 12-27 October, more than 70 classics travelled 300-plus miles between Gulf fuel stations across England and Scotland.

STATESIDE LATIN EPIC
The Alfa Romeo 6C-1750 Gran Sport of Shawn and Leanne Till won the 1000 Miglia Warm Up USA for the second year in a row. The event, which returned from 22-27 October, included time trials, a night-time challenge and a head-to-head competition.

HELP TO GET OVER THE LINE
GSF Car Parts has launched a new competition that will help three enthusiasts finish their classic project or restoration. Winners of 'Get Your Motor Running' will land £1k-worth of parts. You can apply for yourself or a friend before 31 December. See gsfcarparts.com/getyourmotorrunning

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DVLA told to understand the historic-vehicle sector

The Minister for the Future of Roads, Lilian Greenwood MP, has thrown her support behind the Cabinet Office's independent review of the DVLA, published on 7 November. Janette Beinart, a non-executive director at National Highways, reviewed the DVLA's extensive remit and some of her strongest recommendations concern historic-vehicle registrations.

The DVLA now has 6-12 months to align with UK Central Government Standards on complaints handling, to clarify how to make a complaint and the role of the Independent Complaints Assessor, and make all policies and procedures consistent and readily available.

Within 12 months, the DVLA must 'deliver a process for understanding and addressing the issues faced by the historic vehicles sector, informed by the public call for evidence'.

In 12-18 months, it must review all stakeholder forums to ensure that participants can see and review action taken to address their concerns and report back to the DVLA board.

That the strong representations by the Historic & Classic Vehicles Alliance, Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, Royal Automobile Club, owners and enthusiasts have made their mark is clear from the comment: 'The review found that for customers using a small group of specific services including… registration of historic vehicles and classic cars… the overall customer experience is less satisfactory. This is often due to legislative constraints, dated systems, inexperienced handlers and unoptimised processes. Whilst these customer groups form a small minority overall, the impact on the individual is often significant and can impact both ability to work and lifestyle. There is a clear need to improve services to them.'

The DVLA is a huge organisation that struggles to implement change: the government now has a duty to ensure that these changes are made.

The Royal Automobile Club picks its top books of 2024

David Whyley's *The Austin Pedal Car Story* was announced as the Royal Automobile Club's Motoring Book of the Year at a ceremony in London on 30 October. Published by Porter Press, it focuses on the J40 and Pathfinder pedal cars, on which David is a leading expert. The title explores their story, rooted in an initiative to help former miners back to work. "This book was all about securing future interest in our history," said David (above left), "and I felt I needed to tell the story of how the motor industry helped the people of the Welsh Valleys."

Morgan: An English Enigma by Martyn Webb, *BMW: Behind The Scenes* by Steve Saxty, *Goldie* by John Mayhead and *The last eye witness* by Doug Nye were among the category winners on the night. The Graham Robson Award, which recognises a first-time author, went to Bob Evans for *Happy Lucky Days: My Life in Racing*.

A Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr Clare Hay (above right), whose debut title *Bentley: The Vintage Years* was first published in 1986.

OBITUARY

DENNIS ADAMS 1929-2024

Marcos legend Dennis Adams died on 3 November, aged 92. Inextricably linked with the Wiltshire marque, this gifted designer nevertheless enjoyed a career that encompassed off-roaders and city cars via endurance racers. A product of the 1950s Specials boom, he built chassis for Brian Lister before joining Marcos at the jumping-off point in 1959 and shaping the 1800, which caused a furore when it was introduced in '64. Variations on the theme emerged over the following three decades, the irony being that it was intended as a stopgap. He also shaped the remarkable Probe series alongside brother Peter before departing for the USA in the early '70s, returning to the UK a decade later to work for Glenfrome prior to offering the Jaguar XJ-based Adams Roadster. His final car design was the Rotrax, which he likened to a four-wheeled BMX. RH

Alliance update

For my first comment to *C&SC* readers since joining the HCVA, it is particularly encouraging that one of the Alliance's key campaigns is about to enter its next stage (left). Representatives from the DVLA have been regular speakers at our Heritage Matters member insights days (below).

Janette Beinart's independent review of the DVLA specifically references the huge amount of frustration regarding the lack of progress in resolving numerous registration issues, and how its customer service is less than satisfactory across our sector.

This means the DVLA and the DfT are required by ministers to address issues raised in the report, and in effect have the green light to move forward under the new parliament on the next steps from the Call for Evidence specific to our sector. The HCVA immediately restated its offer of open and transparent engagement, and access to the vast resource of specialised knowledge and experience across our membership.

We have a real opportunity to address the challenges that have trapped many specialist-vehicle owners and businesses in a spiral of uncertainty, and to inform and help shape improvements to future policies and procedures designed to deliver sensible and effective outcomes for industry, consumers and government.

DALE KELLER
Chief executive officer
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SMITH LANDS FF1600 GLORY

The Walter Hayes Trophy once again provided superb action on Silverstone's National Circuit. It is the world's largest Formula Ford 1600 event, and nearly 90 entrants arrived for the 24th edition of the knockout competition on 2-3 November, coming from as far afield as Australia, South Africa and the United States.

Saturday's action centred on qualifying heats and pre-finals, before the elimination stages kicked off day two. With entrants whittled down during Sunday's races, the final 36 battled for the coveted Walter Hayes Trophy in the weekend's fading light.

The Grand Final delivered some fantastic racing across 15 laps. Rory Smith (Medina Sport JL18) kept his cool at the head of the fast and squabbling leading pack to take victory by just 0.293 secs, chased home by the Spectrum 011C-mounted duo of Andrew Rackstraw and KC Ensor-Smith.

In the Grand Final, the Van Diemen RF90 of Alex Ames was the highest-placed car in the pre-1993 Heritage class, winning the Neil Cunningham Trophy, while Andy Gosling (Van Diemen RF79) was happy to reach the main event in his pre-1982 Classic racer to claim both the SDC Trophy and the Ron Collins Pint.

Benn Simms (Merlyn Mk20) was triumphant in the Carl Hamer Trophy final for pre-1982 cars, taking the chequer by a mere 0.068 secs to hold off a determined challenge from Alex Fores (Van Diemen RF80) and Jake Shortland (Lola T440). The trio capitalised on opening-lap collisions that ruled out Rick Morris (Royale RP29) and former Formula One racer – and multiple 24 Hours of Le Mans class winner – Jan Magnussen (Van Diemen RF78).

Darwin Smith (Van Diemen RF90) managed to keep ahead of the similar cars of Ames and Cam Jackson to claim a barnstorming Janet Cesar Memorial Trophy final for pre-'98 FF1600 cars, with a slim 0.154 secs margin of victory.

From top: Darwin Smith heads the Janet Cesar Memorial pack; Carl Hamer Trophy winner Benn Simms in his Merlyn

Elsewhere, Isaac Phelps won two out of the three Ginetta Junior races to become the Winter Series champion; George Line (Dallara F308) was first in both Monoposto Tiedeman Trophy encounters; and the Historic Sports Car Club Allcomers spoils were taken by Charlie Besley (Tiga SC82) and Steve Deeks (Alfa Romeo 4C).

MICK WALKER

Rory Smith (45) leads the Walter Hayes Trophy Grand Final field – he went on to win by 0.293 secs

Clockwise from main: Volvo PV544 crew took a historic third victory; class-winning Toyota; Crosby/Procter Mini

WILL BROADHEAD

Volvo romps to third successive win in epic Rally of the Tests enduro

From Darlington to Windermere via Scotland, across 800 miles with 34 tests and 24 regularities through day and night, the 22nd edition of HERO-ERA's RAC Rally of the Tests, from 7-10 November, was as tough as ever. And, for the first time since the RAC Rally was created in 1932, one crew claimed a third consecutive victory.

Dan Willan and Niall Frost led after the Prologue, then survived their 1962 Volvo PV544 having no brakes the following morning. After running repairs, they were still the ones to beat as day one ended in Edinburgh, lying 46 secs clear of John King and Oli Waldock (Toyota MR2), with Callum Guy/Amy Henchoz (Sunbeam Tiger) third. Come the close of day two, the lead was up to 1 min 48 secs; King/Waldock were still second and Guy/Henchoz third, by just a second from Paul Crosby and Ali Procter (Austin Mini Cooper 'S').

Willan/Frost's dominance led to them winning by 4 mins. Because only pre-1968 cars are eligible for overall awards, King/Waldock scooped class spoils from third on the road, with Crosby/Procter fighting through to second overall.

Paul Dyas and Martyn Taylor (Volvo PV544) were third after lost time on a final-day regularity dropped Guy/Henchoz to fourth, although they won their class.

Around the clock at Daytona

HSR/JESSICA JOHNK

Historic Sportscar Racing's 10th Classic Daytona 24 Hour, at the Florida circuit from 30 October-3 November, hosted more than 140 entrants competing in six Run Groups, twice around the clock, with each class racing four times.

Three-time Le Mans winner Marcel Fässler with Gérard Lopez in a 1969 Lola T70 MkIII (right) were the only drivers to repeat their success of 12 months earlier, building on a lead of 40 secs after two heats to claim Group A.

In Group B, Jim Norman and co-driver Scooter Gabel were in control at the halfway point in their 1980 Porsche 935 K3, and they continued their strong run through Sunday to take the spoils. There were some solo drivers, too: Cory Friedman (1995 Porsche 993 Carrera RSR) prevailed in Group C, while Todd Sloan (2006 Riley XX Daytona Prototype) survived late drama to win Group D.

The meeting's most closely fought victory was in Group E. Mike Jordan and son Andrew (2011 Porsche 997.2 GT3 Cup) held a lead of just over 4 secs going into the final run, but a win in this was enough for Michael Merritt and Steve Dunn (2018 Porsche 991.2 Cup) to snatch first place. Finally, after almost a decade of trying, Pierce Marshall and Eric Foss (2017 Cadillac DPi) took Group F.

HISTORIC ACROPOLIS RALLY

Escort lands Greek victory

Richard Jordan and Sam Collis (Ford Escort RS 2000, left) scored a debut Historic Acropolis Rally win on 10 November, as Tibor Érdi Jnr and István Kérek (Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4) won the FIA European Historic Rally Championship.

Andrea 'Zippo' Zivian, the points leader ahead of the finale, was injured falling off the podium during October's FIA Motorsport Games, leaving Érdi/Kérek to fight it out with Ernie Graham and Anna Graham in their Ford Escort RS 1800 for overall honours.

After leg one, Jordan/Collis were trailing Érdi/Kérek by 14.9 secs, then moved into joint first on leg two's opening stage. The crews traded times, but a broken driveshaft dropped Érdi/Kérek to second on the penultimate stage, with Graham/Graham completing the EHRC podium.

Paddock profile

EMW ORIGINALS

IAN CALDERWOOD
CARS *1963 TVR Grantura MkIII, 1966 Triumph GT6 Mk1*
SERIES *Equipe Classic Racing*

"I started competing in 2019. My uncle is Win Percy, so I've had a keen interest since I was a teenager. Spectating at 2010's Le Mans Classic I thought: why watch when you can race? Soon, the GT6 I got when I was 17 turned from road car to racer.

"Zandvoort 2023 is most memorable. My son Lewis and I were to share my TVR, with the GT6 as a spare, but the organisers suggested he race it. It was lovely seeing both cars on the grid and watching Lewis close on me during a downpour."

DICKON SIDDALL

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Clockwise from right: as sold in the USA; on arrival at the UK docks; unusual extra centre console; Ian Baillie, the Jaguar's former owner

JAG IS A STORIED FORMER RACER

Ian Baillie was commissioned at Sandhurst in 1948 and had a distinguished Army career, having commanded first the Lifeguards and then the Household Cavalry, before retiring in 1972. He was killed in a road accident in 1978.

During his Army career Baillie was able to find time to take part in motorsport and rallying. He was a well-known Jaguar racing driver through the 1950s and '60s, owning and competing in XKs and D-types, as well as an Aston Martin DBR1. One of his former cars has recently been uncovered.

In 1955 he bought a nearly new, cream-coloured Jaguar XK140 fhc, the 19th right-hand-drive example built and one of only 193 Special Edition fixed-head coupés with a C-type head and other optional extras. It was registered PXU 643 and among the events in which Baillie took part were the 1957 12 Hours endurance race at Reims, where he finished 14th; the 1958 Rallye Monte-Carlo, which ended in retirement; the 1958 Tulip Rally; and the 1958 RAC International Rally of Great Britain.

Elwyn Smith had long been a fan of the Jaguar XK range, and for many years he had tried to trace the XK140 that had once been owned by his family. In the end he decided that he simply wanted any XK140, and in October 2023 he spotted a coupé for sale in the USA. After obtaining details including the chassis number, he started researching the car and discovered that it had once had a competition career. "It looked very tatty but very original," Elwyn explains, "and not messed around with, apart from the addition of a non-standard centre console containing a collection of extra dials and switches." Further research revealed that this car, now wearing the number 1380 AH, was originally PXU 643. Ian Baillie's daughter helped with some photographs, and Elwyn took a leap of faith by buying the Jaguar unseen and importing it to the UK via Southampton.

MOTORING PICTURE LIBRARY

At Prescott in '58, part of the RAC Rally

Once united with the car he continued delving into its history, discovering that between 1963 and March 1972 it had changed hands two times, during which period it may have been re-registered. Not much else is known about it, other than that the XK140 continued to be used in competition.

In March 1972 it was purchased by David Redetzke, an American based in Suffolk. He bought the car as a non-runner, but later told Elwyn that the silencers had been choked with rust, and only that had been preventing the car from working. Redetzke took the XK with him to the USA in 1972 and put it in storage for 50-plus years with very little or no use. He knew nothing of the Jaguar's former competition history.

Elwyn is now contemplating his next move, but is determined that its condition will be conserved as much as possible. He explains: "I love the character of the car just as it is now – the battle scars it carries, the bolt-holes on the front where the foglights were fitted for the Reims 12 Hours in 1957. It all tells a wonderful story, full of patina. I find the allure of the well-used, unrestored classic car compelling – warts and all."

TRIUMPH SOLE SURVIVOR

Clockwise from main: the Gloria Ten was last worked on in the '90s; rechromed brightwork; engine was turned over regularly

The Pre-1940 Triumph Motor Club states that only one 1935 facelifted Gloria Ten saloon survives from six built on leftover 1934 chassis. This was an updated version of the previous year's car, fitted with the 1935 honeycomb radiator and a specially made bonnet.

This survivor has been in the hands of Derek Creasey since 1974. "I do not have any history on BXL 55 before I found it, seized, in a very damp, rat-infested garage adjacent to a stream in Tooting that year," he says. "I was always hoping to finish it, having put hundreds of hours work into it at the time. Unfortunately, that day has now passed for me."

In the 1970s the chassis was overhauled and Derek had the engine rebuilt, along with the clutch and gearbox. "I would take it out around my estate as a rolling chassis, with just one seat and no body," he recalls. "I did start to put it back together in the mid-'80s, with much of the ash frame replaced, but this came to an end with a redundancy, inflation, children and a mortgage."

In the '90s it was found to have a split in the outer block, so the head was removed to relieve any pressure, but nothing more has been done since then, other than to regularly turn the engine over. In the meantime, the Gloria and parts were kept in a dry garage.

Now the car has gone. Following an advertisement in the Pre-1940 Triumph Motor Club's magazine, the Ten has found a good home in Peterborough. Hopefully this rare interim example of Triumph's entry-level saloon will soon be seen out and about again after its 50-plus years of hibernation.

WOLSELEY READY FOR RESTORATION

In 1954, a Fredrick Frost OBE from Selsey exchanged his Morris Oxford for a new Wolseley 4/44, registered PPO 852. His work with Cable & Wireless took him all over the world, so the Wolseley did not get used as much as it otherwise would.

In 1979, by which time it had covered only 30,000 miles, it passed to his grandson, Mike Somerville, who decided to keep it as a hobby for his retirement. It was last driven on the road in 1985. However, before it went into storage, Mike had the car repainted from grey to a Jaguar blue and the brightwork was rechromed.

The car was kept in a dry lock-up in Sheen for 20 years, then in 2002 it was moved to Little Bookham, Surrey. Mike is now ready to start work on the car at last. "Fundamentally it is sound," he says, "but in need of some careful renovation. In time I hope it will be taken back to showroom condition." He has asked Wolseley Register members who live locally if they can offer any advice.

Clockwise from above: Wolseley is finally out of storage; interior is in good condition; engine needs a clean, but the mileage is low

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Clockwise from main: Talbot had been stored since '63; sound interior is mostly complete; body is almost rust-free

AN UNTOUCHED TALBOT

In April 1963, a 1931 Talbot 75 saloon, JO 6000, was re-taxed in Derby; soon after, it developed engine trouble and was put away in a wooden shed. There it sat, largely forgotten, until early in 2024, when it was removed and taken to auctioneer Mellors & Kirk of Nottingham. On 11 June it was sold for £3200.

The sale description reported: 'The interior, while showing some deterioration, is complete, with the seats possibly restorable. The dashboard contains most of the important instruments. The body is fair and the chassis appears sound. The car could be fully restored but is a suitable candidate as an oily-rag specimen. It needs preserving, being one of the 3200 18hp models manufactured.' One of the images appeared to show the Talbot being pretty derelict and possibly even past rescue. How wrong can you be?

The car was bought by Terry Talbot (no connection), who says: "Once cleaned up, it was found to be in amazingly good condition. There was no corrosion except where the nearside wing joins the running board, this due to a small leak in the otherwise dry garage in which it had stood. The doors close like those of a railway carriage and the leather is quite supple, with just a couple of small tears. The attention to detail of the leather around the door edges is as good as any old Rolls-Royce I have owned. It has a quick-throw driver's doorhandle, and the rear rubber doormat is embossed with the word 'Talbot' in big letters. The engine is seized, although the car retains its original mascot and a delightfully period sunvisor."

The history has missing links. The 75 was built and bodied in 1931, and Hartwells of Park End Street, Oxford, took delivery on 14 January 1932. It stayed with the firm until '33, when it was registered JO 6000. There's then a gap until March 1947, when it was registered to a Frank Gee of Huddersfield, and in 1953 it was with Edwin Cooper in Coventry then went to a Richard Fenning in Ashby de-la-Zouch. In 1958 it was acquired by a Derby resident whose name is the last in the logbook.

AZU IS SPECIAL FRENCH FIND

It is very satisfying when buying a long-stored vehicle to discover that it comes with all of its original documents and invoices. This was the case with a 2CV-based 1960 Citroën AZU van that Alan Lloyd from Surrey has discovered. It was found in Valros, in the very far south of France, and it had covered just 38,000 miles from new. Alan says: "The van had only had one owner, but, excitingly, it came with all of its 80 years' worth of paperwork, including the invoice. It was still on its original numberplates, meaning it had never moved out of its home district in France. It came off the road in 1999 when its owner died."

In 1958, Monsieur Herman Griou ordered a new van from Montpellier Automobiles; he made the special request that the Citroën be fitted with full-length sliding windows on both sides and enlarged windows in the rear doors, and that two extra seats were provided for back-seat passengers. It was presumably used more as a car than a van, and it took two years from ordering to delivery.

Alan is delighted with his discovery. He adds: "The van is absolutely lovely, with an almost perfect dashboard and all its original panels, including the floors and chassis. Of course, lots of French dents are present. Importing from France and registering in the UK since Brexit is much more difficult, involving a lot more paperwork and expense, but I took the plunge because of the paper trail and the solidity of the Citroën. It also has a rather lovely Provac roof-rack. It is now UK-registered and proving to be a very useful workhorse, if a trifle on the slow side!"

Clockwise from above: seats and extra-large windows were by special order; importing was an onerous task; Provac roof-rack

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The Morris had been parked up under a makeshift carport since 1995, and was in worse condition than first thought

MINOR FRIENDSHIP REIGNITED

In April 2021, Jonathan Watts from Winchester was looking for a project and saw an ad for a '59 Morris Minor in Twickenham. He went to see it and the vendor told him he had disentangled it from a carport in an overgrown garden. "He thought it had only one lady owner since 1961," Jonathan adds. The name on the documents was Miss Elizabeth Bradbury, but her whereabouts were unknown.

Jonathan bought the car, and over the months that passed he kept wondering about the previous long-term owner. The electoral roll took him to Hounslow, where he found that her house had been redeveloped, but some neighbours remembered the car. They had a friend who had been in contact with Elizabeth and were given an address in Isleworth. They eventually met with Elizabeth, who was delighted to learn that the car would be returning to the road. She explained she had been the second owner of 947 GJO, and had bought it from the daughter of an Oxford professor. She and her mother travelled by coach to Oxfordshire to complete the purchase. They lived in London, and took the car on trips over southern England visiting National Trust properties. She told Jonathan: "In 1995, I realised my driving days were coming to an end, but I did not want to part with the car and had a carport built within view of the house where I could keep an eye on her."

Restoration has not been easy, as Jonathan accepted following his first inspection in his workshop: "I realised with some trepidation that, in the light of day, the level of neglect was far greater than I had first concluded, and I began to wonder if it was in fact the same car. There were holes everywhere – inner and outer sills, floorpans, crossmembers, chassis legs and most outer panels."

However, with much help from both the Morris Minor Owners' Club and many friends, gradually each job was attended to and the car was completed. It was not repainted, however, and instead given a thorough clean and polish (left). During the work, a pair of Elizabeth's glasses was found, as well as handwritten routes folded in a map book. When the restoration was completed, Jonathan was able to take the car and show it to Elizabeth (above), who was very excited to see her old Morris again.

INCOMPLETE ARROW NEEDS ATTENTION

The remains of a rare Burlington Arrow have recently come to light. All that is known is that the chassis, with an incomplete plywood body, had stood in the open in Wales for many years before moving to Hampshire 10 years ago, where it has lain since, dry but untouched.

The Burlington Arrow was the brainchild of Haydn Davies, who sold blueprints of this vintage-style two-seater sports car. A chassis was offered, but the designs were for a Herald/Vitesse/Spitfire ladder frame, with further instructions on how to build a plywood tub structure, to be covered in aluminium. It is thought that up to 500 cars were built.

Look familiar?

Want to track down a lost love or looking for history on your current classic? Send details and pictures to the p7 address or email requests to *alastair.clements@haymarket.com*

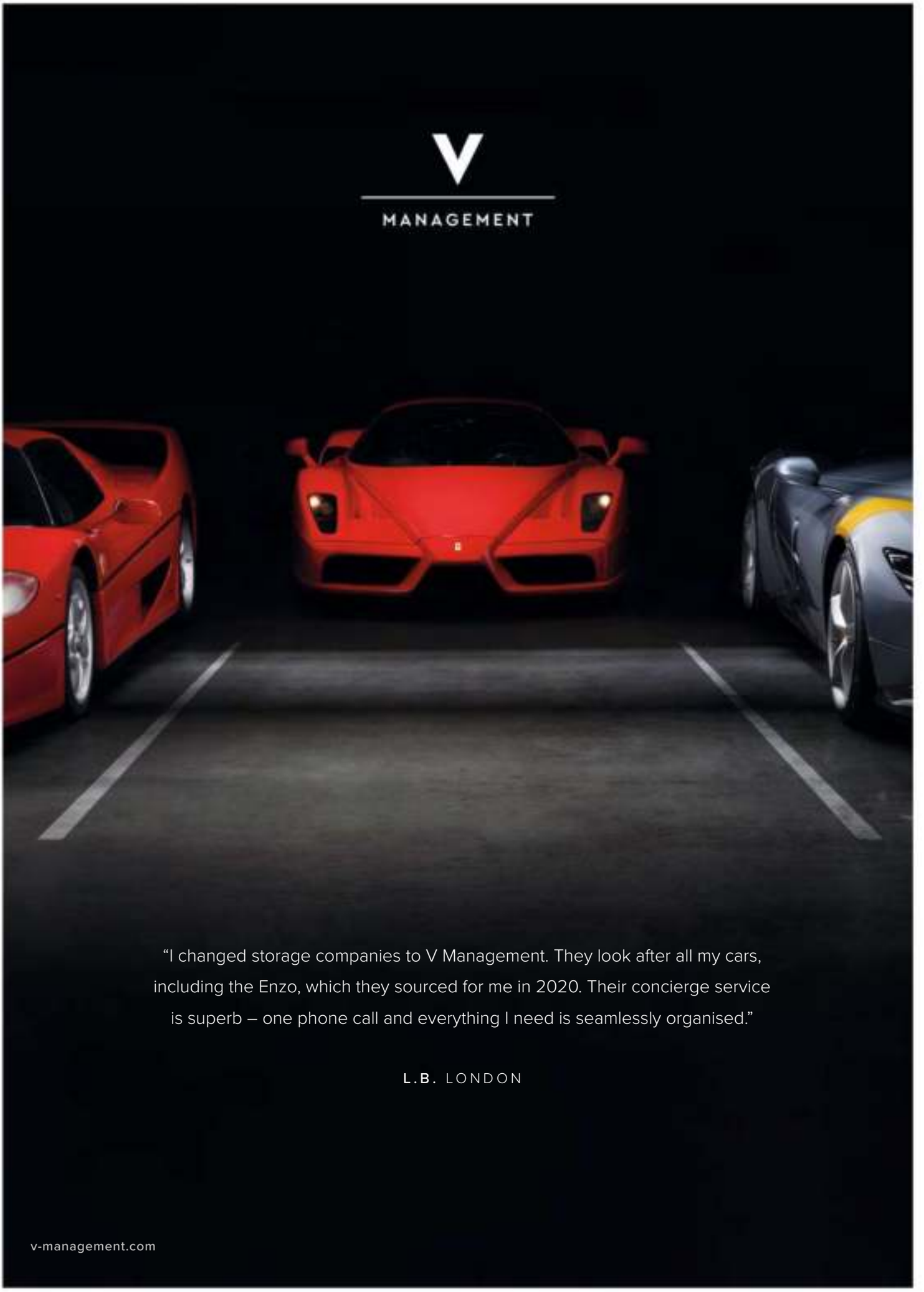
ELAN'S MISSING HISTORY

Peter Svensson of Queensland, Australia, is keen to learn more about the British history of his Lotus Elan S3 drophead. Chassis/unit number 45/7364 is thought to have been sold new in kit form in September 1967, with engine number LP8665LA, and appears to have been registered in the UK as SCG 941F. Possible past owners have included a Lindsay Strickland and a Dennis Callahan, and it is thought to have come to Australia in the early 1970s. The car wears wheelarch flares, and upon arrival Down Under it was painted red, white and gold. It sits on unusual, black-painted JA Pierce alloy wheels. Email svenspeed170645@gmail.com

SEEKING A GOLDEN SL

In 1980, Christopher Dallen was completing an epic tour from Vancouver, Canada, to Europe in his 1977 Chevrolet Corvette when he came across a gold-painted 1973 Mercedes-Benz 450SL in Great Ayton, Yorkshire. He would love to know the SL's whereabouts today. The car was registered 29 FLA at the time, but that number is no longer known to the DVLA. Email christopherdallen@shaw.ca

MICHAEL WARE
Former curator of the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. Send submissions to *waremichael29@gmail.com*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L.B. LONDON
v-management.com

1963 Chevrolet Corvette Rondine epitomises the Americana that fuelled Dan Palatnik's passion for automotive art. Below: '63 Mercedes-Benz 230S Fintail

From top: '37 Delage D8 was created for CMA Models; Alfa BAT 7's showstopping curves faithfully rendered; 1966 Alfa Scarabeo

DAN PALATNIK

This talented Brazilian illustrator creates 3D renderings that are transformed into models and full-scale body bucks

Growing up in São Paulo during the 1960s, Dan Palatnik became fascinated by old American cars. "My father was an engineer and he drove a Chevrolet sedan," he recalls. "At weekends he'd take me to the suburbs to show me the cars in the scrapyards. I loved his stories about the old Hudsons or Mercury Eights we discovered. That's how my hobby started."

There were several wrong turns while finding his true vocation, including engineering studies at university in Rio de Janeiro. "I was lousy at maths and switched to industrial design, but my passion was drawing," he says. "I left college to be a graphic illustrator and for 20 years I specialised in airbrush artwork, but eventually photography for advertising agencies took over. Then, after a client's request for a 3D rendering, I decided to teach myself. I started slowly, drawing vintage radios; as my skills progressed I switched to cars and gradually commissions began to flow in. One of the first was from a Ford pick-up restorer who wanted visuals showing the colour and custom wheel options." Another Brazilian specialist then enlisted Dan for a project with a '48 Talbot-Lago that needed a new body, and word soon spread.

For building up the design, Dan has mastered Autodesk 3ds Max modelling software, but to give a rendering tone and colour he switches to Photoshop: "My work is really just a jumble of 3D parts," he says. "I often think of Magritte's painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*."

Demand for Dan's expertise snowballed, with commissions from restorers, customisers, sculptors, collectors and model manufacturers. From miniatures to rare sports-car restorations, the diversity of interest is remarkable: "Geoff Hacker has become a key hub for rare rebuilds and tasked me with producing renderings of American Specials including the Autopia, Siebler and Grantham Stardust. I enjoy the research and my work helped give the owners a vision for the restored vehicle. Geoff is a great supporter."

When Washington-based car restorer Jim Simpson started to build full-scale Speed Racers inspired by the famous Japanese manga series, Dan was enlisted to create the computerised visual, which was scaled up to produce a body buck of the wild Mach 5.

Model manufacturers around the world are now regular clients, including ACMA and Esval. Dan says one of his most interesting commissions was from Marshall Buck of US firm CMA Models to create a 3D study of the fabulous Pourtout-bodied 1937 Delage D8: "I admire pre-war streamlined body styles and this Delage was fabulous to recreate. Marshall is fastidious about accuracy and detail, so the 1:12 miniature will look stunning when finished."

Although automotive work is the prime outlet for the talented Brazilian, he has also occasionally done boats and aircraft, including the 1925 Schneider Trophy Curtiss R3C, as raced by Jimmy Doolittle: "I would love to render all those beautiful seaplanes, particularly the fantastic Macchi MC 72, but those are probably best left to aircraft specialists." **MW**

See more of Palatnik's work on Instagram at @danpalat and at garagemdigital.blogspot.com – or email dan.palat@gmail.com

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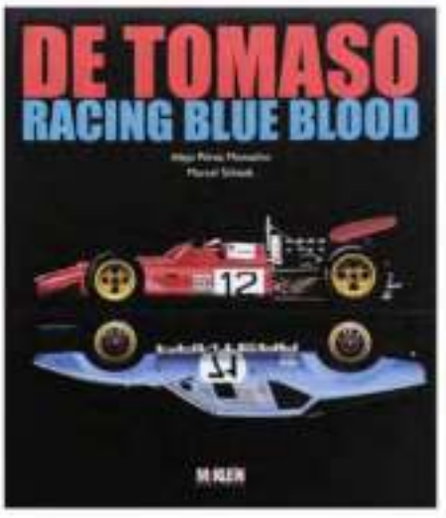
CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR

Book of the month



DE TOMASO: RACING BLUE BLOOD

You have to applaud the dedication of Argentinian Alejo Pérez Monsalvo and renowned Swiss marque authority Marcel Schaub for this impressive history of De Tomaso. Across 450 pages, they cover the ambitious life and amazingly diverse automotive projects of Alejandro de Tomaso, the Argentine expat who, after racing Oscas, settled in Modena to launch a company to build his own racing cars.

From Formula Juniors to F1, supercars to Minis, this divisive character left a remarkable legacy. Over four decades, de Tomaso charmed major manufacturers and the finest automotive talent to engage with his dreams and schemes. Although a hopeless draughtsman, he was never short of ideas as his balancing of wide-ranging projects proved.

Monsalvo and Schaub break the story into four eras – 1959-'63, 1964-'74, 1975-'90 and 1991-2003 – weaving individual project stories with memories from engineers, stylists and drivers. De Tomaso is best remembered for his innovative 'backbone' chassis design and the world's first mid-engined production car, but it's the sections on his failed projects that offer the 'never seen that' factor. Fruitless sagas include the controversial De Tomaso 1600, which appeared to clone the Fiat X1/9, and the short-lived, Ford V6-powered Mustela 2+2 coupé that vanished after the 1969 Turin show.

During the '60s, influenced by Colin Chapman's successful links with Ford, de Tomaso moved into the tuning business with first a Torino-based T68 (an Italian-built Anglia), then a hot Cortina fitted with unique Campagnolo wheels, twin Webers and an oil cooler. Just two were completed, both later scrapped. As well as Fords, de Tomaso produced Simca 1000 tuning kits for the Spanish market.

From factory archives and collections, the authors have dug deep to source c500 images, plus engineering drawings and ephemera, and the stylish layout by London-based Becketts Design celebrates the subject brilliantly. Be it fascinating production-line shots or a pensive Frank Williams chatting with Piers Courage in the F1 505-38, the double-page spreads are engrossing. Refreshingly, all the photos are period, with no modern filler.

The tale of the 1980 Chrysler Pantera II highlights de Tomaso's problems with Italian unions, which led to death threats and rumours that he carried a gun for protection. The compact model was aimed at the Porsche 924 and had input from various stylists, but bad blood between de Tomaso and Don de la Rossa at Chrysler meant it went no further than a few prototypes.

The book concludes with an amazing appendix of race and road cars, including the histories of the 14 mighty Group 4 Panteras. Across 50 pages, the final section details every formula result by a De Tomaso-built racer. Limited to 550 copies, this beautiful but expensive book would no doubt have delighted its subject. De Tomaso died of a stroke in '03 after negotiations with Russian giant UAZ to finance a new factory in southern Italy for his last project, the Nuova Valellunga compact GT. **MW**

€350 *Alejo Pérez Monsalvo & Marcel Schaub, McKlein Publishing. ISBN 9783947156580*

'De Tomaso charmed major manufacturers and the finest automotive talent to engage with his dreams and schemes'

Jaguar Cars 1946 to 2008

As Jaguar steps back from internal combustion and heads into an all-electric era, it's a good time to look back at some of its past hits. Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club editor Nigel Thorley explores the Coventry firm's post-war cars in this 160-page paperback. Packed with hundreds of photos from his own collection, each model gets a thorough history and in-depth factfile, including specifications and production detail. The introduction explains Jaguar's origins in the Swallow Sidecar Co, too, but some racier models, such as the XJ220 supercar and XKSS, aren't included. **RS**

£22.50 Nigel Thorley, Veloce. ISBN 9781787117761

Renault 5

These compact Amberley books vary hugely in what the author makes of them, and this is a highlight from Mark Bradbury. The density of knowledge is immense, but he keeps it readable. Even aficionados should find new facts, and it's thoroughly enjoyable for general French-car fans, placing the R5 as the pioneer it was. The Supercinq gets significant space, too, as do sporting variants, but icons such as the 5 Turbo get necessarily short shrift. With well-chosen images across its 96 pages, this small paperback, like the Renault, packs a big punch. **CC**

£15.99 *Mark Bradbury, Amberley Publishing. ISBN 9781398118652*

The Cyclecar

Editions of the pre-WW1 magazine *The Cyclecar* are very rare and much prized, but, thanks to enthusiast Cally Callomon and vintage bicycle restorer Tim Gunn (*Also in my garage*, March 2020), the 1912-'13 issues are now available once again, reprinted as a single 300-page volume. Packed with event reports, cartoons, period advertisements, homebuilt Specials, short stories and some wonderfully evocative photography, this publication is a total delight that vividly captures this innovative era of Rollo, Bédélia, Simple *et al*. **MW**

£35 *Cally Callomon, Antar Press (available via gunnandco.co.uk)*

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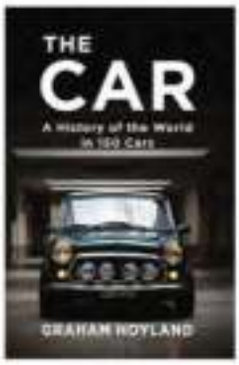

The Car: A History of the World in 150 Cars

Really a history of the motor car, rather than the world, this book is nonetheless a good way of filling the gaps in how we got from horse-drawn carriages to the Tesla Model S. Author Graham Hoyland puts all of the cars he focuses on into their historic context with real fluidity, while interesting facts are deployed liberally. Want to know why car nerds think the Fiat 128 is so great, or the details of Dieselgate? It's all here.

The author's biases are needlessly prominent, however, be it his anti-EV stance or pronounced Eurocentrism – that the Japanese car industry gets only a few paragraphs is derisory. Two 16-page sections of colour images break up the text in the hardback, populated mostly by basic photography from inside a couple of automotive museums. Not all the eponymous 150 cars are pictured, but most are. There is good detail woven into a compelling story here, but it's a misleading title and production values could be higher for the price. **CC**

£24.99 *Graham Hoyland, Key Publishing. ISBN 9781802829167*

Faces of Formula 1: The Sixties

Grand Prix drivers of the '60s weren't mere mortals, they were somehow different. Fame and glamour surrounded them at every turn and, if they were lucky, they got to go home at the end of a race weekend having lived to see another day. Dr Benno Müller was an amateur photographer from the Black Forest who had his first taste of motor racing in 1957. He was so enthralled by this exciting, dangerous world, he started to capture the drivers on film at a time when access was easy and press passes had yet to be invented.

Each of the 80 historic aces featured have two pages dedicated to them, with a single candid portrait photograph alongside a brief outline of their career. There isn't a lot of text to get through here, this is much more a visual snapshot of each driver, concentrating on capturing their characters through the lens. **DC**

£70 *Hartmut Lehbrink & Jörg-Thomas Födisch, Icon Publishing. ISBN 9781910584606*

A.J. Foyt: Survivor Champion Legend

If you're interested in American motorsport, this doorstop of a biography will grip you from start to finish. For five years, award-winning sports writer Art Garner has been researching AJ Foyt's dramatic life, with masterful results. The wealth of quotes about the four-time Indy 500 winner and extensive use of contemporary press reports brilliantly brings the Texan ace's colourful and controversial character to life.

Be it a constant fear of fire, which claimed so many of Foyt's rivals, or the psychological tactics of teammate Dan Gurney during their 1967 Le Mans win, Garner covers the highs and lows of this legend that many US fans still argue was the greatest. He goes to great lengths to establish the truth and dismiss oft-repeated myths about this cocky, tough man. Be it stockers, Midgets, Indy or sports-prototypes, Foyt loved to race, at the cost of rarely seeing his young family.

Although an A5 hardback, this 600-pager has a fascinating range of images, from snaps of five-year-old AJ sitting in his dad's Midget in the family garage to a pensive portrait at the restart of the tragic '64 Indy. Volume One covers up to 1977, and we can't wait for the sequel. **MW**

£37 *Art Garner, Octane Press. ISBN 9781642341782*

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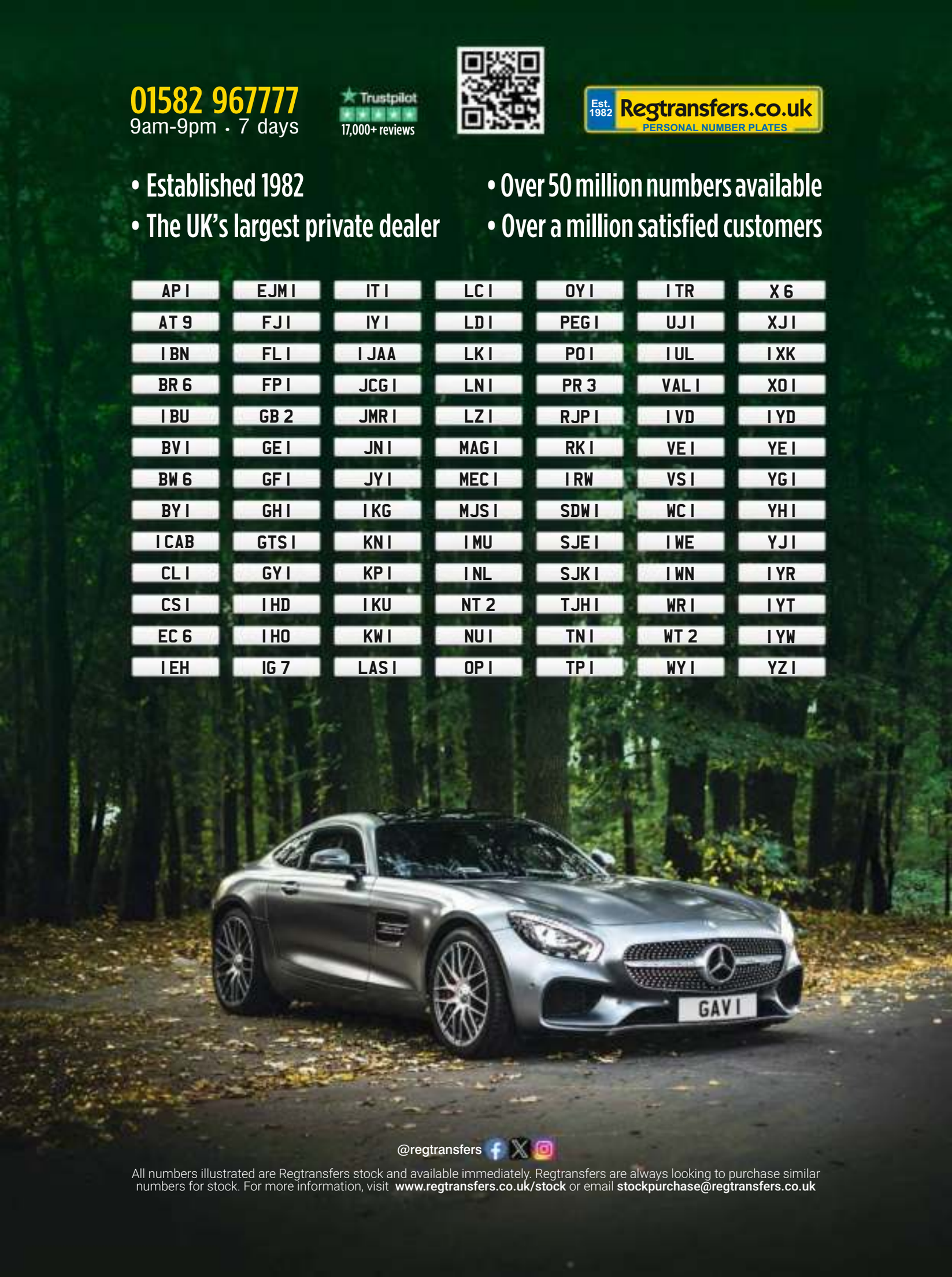

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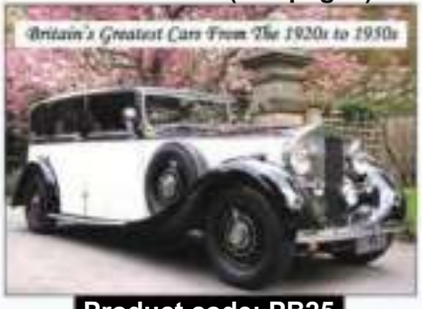

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Model of the month

ISO GRIFO S1

Automodello, 1:24, $249.99

The beautiful Iso Grifo has inspired some wonderful miniatures since Renzo Rivolta's Chevy V8-powered supercoupé had its debut at the 1963 Turin Salon. From the popular Matchbox No 14 and Corgi toys, the Giorgetto Giugiaro-styled stunner continues to prompt modelmakers, as recent sold-out releases from Cult and BoS-Models confirm.

Now James Cowen of Automodello has launched a handbuilt 1:24 collection. The American has chosen the prettiest Series 1 open-headlight version, offered with Borrani wires or Campagnolo alloy wheels. The superb cast-resin miniature brilliantly captures Giugiaro's sleek lines and the trim details are high quality. Colour options include red or the pictured Verde Aintree Metallizzato at $249.99, as well as orange and silver for a $50 premium, plus a final series of six in black at $899.99 each. *automodello.com*

1:18

1 MCG's Riccardo Patrese 1983 South African Grand Prix Brabham BT52, £72.99
2 Kk-Scale's 1972 Chevrolet Corvette C3, £96.99
3 Tecnomodel's Niki Lauda 1974 Spanish GP Ferrari 312 B3, £294.99
4 Solido's 2000 BMW M3, £55.99

1:43

5 Matrix's 1971 Alfa Romeo Caimano, £118.99
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11 LookSmart's 1965 Sebring 12 Hours Ferrari 250LM, £105
12 Spark's 1931 Spa 24 Hours Mercedes-Benz SSK, £74.99
13 Autocult's 1948 Citroën Traction Avant 11 BL Spohn, €114.95 (*autocult-models.de*)

Edited by Mick Walsh. Unless stated, all items are available from Diecast Legends (01483 407555; diecastlegends.com), with a 10% discount for orders from C&SC readers quoting 'CS125'

Pick of the month

RACE TO THE BOTTOM

McLaren has partnered with Levi's to offer a range of heritage-inspired products, with the logos and embellishments taking cues from the marque's past. The denim jacket has already sold out, but a set of overalls and a pair of jeans, both unisex, remain. The jeans are to the US brand's staple 501 cut and include sewn-on McLaren patches, as well as a back pocket paying tribute to the team's 1988 title-winning MP4/4. These are £115, while the full-length racing suits are £425. A wider range of clothes with more modern McLaren iconography is also available.
levi.com

Speedy scribbler

Proving both that some people can never get enough of the sound of a car's exhaust, and that Mercedes-Benz is capable of some silliness, the marque now offers ballpoint pens that 'rev' at a click of a button, priced at €12.90 each. The 300SL, Patent-Motorwagen, AMG 300SEL 6.8 and a 'basic V8' were recorded for four versions, in silver, green, red and black respectively.
mercedes-benz-classic-store.com

Tread culinary

Your dinner plates can receive a motoring flourish with this tasteful design from Carlivant, which features the tread pattern of a Dunlop D5 moulded into the surface. Much more subtle than a printed marque crest or similar, though they may be a pain to wash – dishwasher recommended. But they are hardly cheap, at £205 for a set of four or £55.80 for one.
carlivant.com

Testing for a bright spark

Gunson's new Spark Plug Tester (part no 77176) is a new mains-powered diagnostic tool that can fire spark plugs on display at a rate of up to an equivalent engine speed of 6000rpm.

This allows the user to investigate a plug that may operate fine at idle, but struggles at higher revs. It's able to test two units concurrently, so a problematic one can be compared with another that's known to work. A neat tool that could prevent throwing away good spark plugs as soon as an ignition issue arises, it costs £73.15.
gunson.co.uk

Tested this month

WOWO'S AWESOME FOAM

More commonly known as snow foam, Wowo's Awesome Foam is a pre-wash formula intended to soak into and lift away dirt from paintwork ahead of the usual sponge routine. According to its maker, which formulates its own products in Aberdeen: 'It has a bit of a bite to it.' Best set up with a lance attachment to a jetwasher, at dilutions ranging from 5:1 for heavy soiling to 20:1 for protected paint, even with my especially stingy ratio (left) it was noticeably more effective than a simple spray of water. Up the concentration and the car will be rendered white with foam. For a 500ml bottle, £9.99 seems like pretty good value when you might spend the same each time at a petrol station for a similar effect. **AM**
wowos.co.uk

SEALEY 2-IN-1 PEN-LIGHT AND TYRE-PRESSURE GAUGE

Does this Sealey 2-in-1 tool (part no TSTPL01) justify a spot in your glovebox or cold-weather survival kit? Tyre pressures – in bar, psi, kPa or kg/cm² – are clear and bright on the small liquid-crystal display, with an icon indicating how much juice remains in its rechargeable battery. The second button (they look similar, so caution is needed to avoid accidentally burning your retinas) toggles between the super-bright torch and side-mounted, 180-lumen work light. It's ideal for finding a lost dustcap or illuminating your engine bay – two strong magnets stick it to the bonnet. It's not cheap, currently on offer at £32.34, but makes sense as a portable work lamp. **RS**
sealey.co.uk

Cat got the chrome

Jaguar specialist SNG Barratt has the answer for anyone who thinks their XK engine doesn't look sparkly enough: a Chrome Hardware Kit (part CR1050). Suitable for all XK motors, the set includes chromed nuts for the cylinder head and cam cover, chromed 'D' washers and bright copper sealing washers. A flash but satisfying job for your Jaguar or Daimler, the kit is £89.11.
sngbarratt.com

Rubber be gone

All BMC A-series engines use rubber grommets on their rocker-cover retaining bolts, which can deteriorate when exposed to oil, leading to leaks. Mini Spares is now offering silicone grommets to prevent exactly this issue: part 12A1358EVO is just £0.90 per unit and will fit all A-series and A+ engines.
minispares.com

Smooth operator

American lubricant manufacturer Bardahl has officially entered the UK market, offering its wide range of motor oils, greases and other automotive fluids. That includes a classic-friendly 20w50 mineral oil (pictured, £29.99 for 5 litres), and a full line of racing-focused lubricants and coolants. All are being distributed by the Bentley Motor Group in West Yorkshire.
bardahl.co.uk

CaDA RUF CTR YELLOWBIRD

I'm a huge Lego fan, so was keen to try this 1515-piece set from market disruptor CaDA – not least because the twin-turbo *über*-911 is such a cool subject. In 1:12 scale, making the completed model 37cm long, and priced at £69.99, it comes beautifully packaged and feels just like Lego Technic at first. The instructions aren't as clear as the Danish original and the pieces don't quite fit together in such a satisfying a way. On the plus side, the design is great – pictures don't do it justice – and the moving mechanicals are charming. Plus, there's CaDA's USP: it can also (at additional cost) be turned into a DiY radio-controlled car. It's good enough to make the saving of more than 50% compared to an equivalent Technic set look very appealing. **AC**
wonderlandmodels.com

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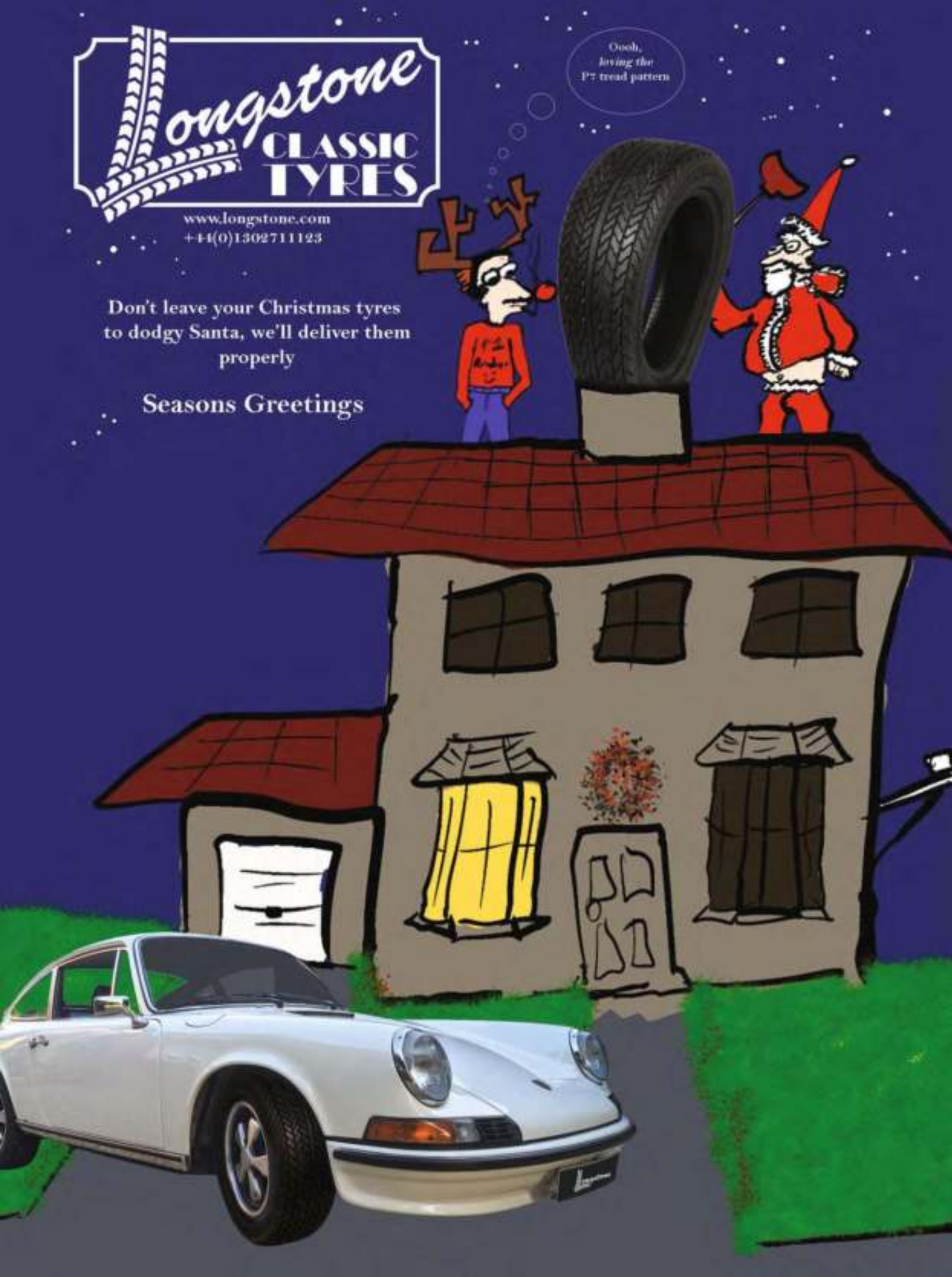
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Seasons Greetings

Mick WALSH

Listening to The Rolling Stones hit *Route 66* as a kid, I loved dreaming of the cars I'd take on that California road trip. But even my imagination couldn't have conjured the little-known, beak-nosed Cannara speeding along the desert highways.

Back in 1966, a student named Ray Cannara designed and built his own sports car, which he drove from St Petersburg, FL, to Los Angeles, CA, to study automotive styling at the ArtCenter College of Design. The Chevy-powered special was roughly finished, and Cannara's mother joined him on the 2500-mile trek. During his first college year, the 18-year-old refined the design, and the following summer he repeated the journey, again with his intrepid mum. The low, silver wedge looked quite alien on the long freeways as it burbled through epic landscapes past huge semi trucks and family sedans.

Cannara started building his Special in 1965, based on a shortened Chevrolet station wagon chassis, with a small-block V8 and three-speed gearbox. The innovative glassfibre body was moulded at home, but its windcheating profile was spoilt for the trip by bulky luggage strapped to the tail like a Depression-era family truck. The lecturers at the California design school, including stylist Strother MacMinn, were no doubt impressed when Cannara turned up in his homebuilt roadster. But the Floridian's talent had already been confirmed when, aged 15, he won a $4000 scholarship with the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild in a General Motors-sponsored automotive design competition.

Cannara later joined Chrysler as a stylist, and among his many projects were the Jeep Wagoneer 2000 and Voyager 3 concept cars. He started out in the age of sketching and clay modelling, but would later pioneer virtual reality as an automotive design tool.

Having dragged his student car around various moves, Cannara let it go in the '70s. It vanished until 2016, when it turned up for sale on Craigslist as part of a deceased estate. Nothing was known about its identity, but enthusiast Bob Cicerone was intrigued enough by the radical car to save it. Geoff Hacker, the fan of lost causes behind undiscoveredclassics.com, was fascinated and traded a Cimbria kit car for the mystery find. A post on Hemmings.com requesting information revealed the identity of Cannara, now a retired artist who, amazingly, lives just 20 miles from Geoff's Tampa home.

'The Chevy V8-powered Special was roughly finished, and Cannara's mother joined him on the 2500-mile trek'

Back in the Sunshine State after nearly 50 years, the project attracted the interest of Guy Dirkin, a retired English émigré with a passion for TVRs. "I became fascinated by the 'wedge' school of car styling and the Cannara looked like a precursor to the Italian movement led by Gandini and Giugiaro," recalls Guy. "The project initially looked an easy restoration, but after 30 years outside, with missing parts and modifications, it became a lengthy task."

Trusted local specialists Rob Hernandez (body and paint) and Ralph Smith (mechanical) were enlisted, while artist Dan Palatnik created 3D drawings to resolve the detailing. "The design really impressed us, particularly the exceptional glassfibre work, the countersunk bolts and the way the doors pivot," says Guy.

By 2020 the Cannara was ready for its debut at the Amelia Island Concours. With its 285bhp and mere 900kg weight, Guy estimates 0-60mph in 5 secs, but so far he hasn't exceeded 60mph: "We need to take it to a runway to test it over 100mph. Unlike so many wedge show cars, this was a fully working driver, as Cannara proved."

It would be fun to one day match Marcello Gandini's 1969 Autobianchi A112 Runabout show car with the Cannara. They look so close in concept that you have to wonder if the Italian styling legend maybe saw a picture of the US one-off in a contemporary magazine.

From top: Ray Cannara's Chevrolet-based, homebuilt Special was an early pioneer of wedge-shaped car design; post-restoration by Guy Dirkin

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Simon TAYLOR

Today's Formula One drivers race cars of technological brilliance, and earn huge sums. They live in a tightly protected bubble: parking spots for their private jets are reserved, the best hotel suites are arranged by obedient staff, healthy food is brought to their rooms. Nothing disturbs their silent focus on the race to come.

It was different in the 1950s. Roy Salvadori told me: "You never booked a hotel, you just turned up. Before one race I decided to behave myself and get a good night's sleep, so I found a single room and went to bed early. I'd just dozed off when there was a knock at the door, and the hotel manager said, 'I've got a young lady here who says she does your timing, and can she sleep on the floor?' In she came.

"Ten minutes later another knock. It was Jim Clark, complete with girlfriend, with nowhere to sleep. They squeezed in, too. I got no more sleep that night because Jimmy snored.

"On another occasion we were having a bit of a party, and I counted 21 people in my room. The lady in the next room banged on the wall, shouting: 'My husband's a racing driver, he needs to sleep. If you don't shut up I'll send him in to sort you out.' A few minutes later Graham Hill came in, looking all angry. So we sat him down and gave him a beer."

Hoteliers' hearts would sink when the racing circus hit town. At an event on Jersey, Peter Walker – who later scored Jaguar's first Le Mans victory – brought his suitcase into the dining room. The pompous *maître d'* objected, picked it up and dumped it outside. The following day Walker grabbed several ducks from a nearby pond, put them in the suitcase but did not properly fasten it, and took it in for dinner. As the furious *maître d'* grabbed it, the ducks burst out and flapped around the room, quacking and astonishing the diners.

At the same race a dignified statue of Queen Victoria disappeared from the town square. It was found later in a racing driver's bed, wearing lipstick, rouge and mascara.

In today's different times, you may think this is rather foolish schoolboy stuff. But, as the Greek philosopher Epicurus almost said: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Racing was very dangerous then. Innes Ireland admitted to me once: "On race morning, as you close your hotel room door with your helmet bag in your hand and set off for the track, the thought runs fleetingly through your head, will I put my hand on this doorknob tonight?"

"Jim Clark squeezed in, complete with his girlfriend. I got no more sleep that night because Jimmy snored"

Then he told me about sharing a hotel room with fellow Team Lotus driver Alan Stacey at Spa in 1960. On Sunday evening he returned to the room alone, to the sad task of packing up Stacey's things. That afternoon at more than 140mph Stacey had been hit in the face by a bird, gone out of control and been killed.

In 1958, for a lark, works BRM driver Harry Schell drove from Paris to Reims for the French Grand Prix in a tiny 393cc Vespa microcar, and parked it proudly outside the Hotel Moderne. While he was at dinner several drivers, including Mike Hawthorn, Peter Collins, Salvadori and Hill, picked it up, got it through the front doors and, watched open-mouthed by the horrified hotel staff, carried it up the main staircase. They could not get it through Schell's bedroom door, so they left it on the landing. Hawthorn suggested they start it up and drive it back down the stairs, but was dissuaded.

Collins was killed at the Nürburgring four weeks later. Hawthorn died in that notorious road accident the following January, and four months after that Schell was killed in the rain at Silverstone. Hill died trying to land his plane in thick fog near Elstree in 1975.

Thank goodness, racing (and private flying) are infinitely safer now. But in those early post-war days, maybe Epicurus was right.

From top: Roy Salvadori – tough in the cockpit, extrovert out of it; Harry Schell's Vespa marooned on the first foor of the Hotel Moderne in Reims

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Martin BUCKLEY

The Fulvia in this issue got me thinking about my history with the little V4 Lancia. My first encounter was when Dad went to look at one in the early '80s, rejecting it on the basis it was too 'buzzy' – like a sort of posh Mini, but with less room in the back. He bought a Flavia Coupé instead, which is why I've always gravitated towards the Fulvia's big sister and probably always will.

I've only owned two Fulvias, and both were retail-red 1.3 Sports. Somehow the Coupés always had a strong following and were valued, whereas even as recently as 10-15 years ago Zagatos were surprisingly cheap: people either didn't know about them, or didn't fancy them.

The Berlinas? Too Noddy even for me, and I'm by no means averse to a boxy saloon car.

He was a brilliant theorist, but I don't think Antonio Fessia had the first idea about making cars people actually wanted to buy. He had no interest in them being quick and fun to drive, let alone competitive. He actively disliked motorsport: the Fulvia was a success *despite* the famous engineer, not because of him.

I bought my first in c1994, from a former college pal of a certain M Walsh who insisted I read the material for his pyramid scheme before he'd sell it to me. Some 15 years later, my second could have been its twin, bought as a project with the engine in bits. It was in repose with a clueless 'specialist' who kept fobbing me off, so we eventually turned up unannounced and retrieved it. We got the engine running with the help of Omicron (Elizabeth Cliffe talked my father-in-law through the mysteries of the timing over the phone) and it made its money at auction quite effortlessly.

I liked driving them. The higher gearing from the 2000HF five-speed makes the Sport a better motorway car than the Coupé. The handling is hard to fault – although I managed to spin the last one I drove on a roundabout while doing c25mph, which was a bit of a shock.

When I came to write for *C&SC* in 1988, there was a Fulvia specialist nearby. He was a curious and somewhat intense man, still living with his mum in a timewarp '50s council house although – as per *Psycho* – the alleged mother was never seen. Something about these cars can attract characters, but also inspires great devotion.

In the early 2000s, while comparing a Coupé with a variety of '60s contemporaries, I met a young Fulvia owner who'd driven from central London for the shoot on a winter's day, despite being heavy with child. The car was her first born: she could be moved to tears if it was left out in the rain. Her Fulvia guru had V4 engines in his lounge and I later encountered him at a Goodwood Lancia Motor Club meeting looking rather pale after a Spitfire (as in the aircraft) had crashed in front of his Fulvia on the track.

'The handling is hard to fault, but I did manage to spin the last Fulvia I drove on a roundabout while doing c25mph'

All this leads me to my friend Neil Babbage, who has only a passing interest in cars, but a passion for anything that flies, particularly military aircraft. As a child of the '50s, I tried to interest him in an Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire, with its jet-engine connections, but he is unlikely to take the bait. There are 'proper' cars in his past: his dad had V8 Rovers and Jag XJs, and he has early memories of Continental touring holidays in the family MG Magnette.

Later, as a student in mid-'70s London, Neil had a wealthy friend called Nick whose parents had bought him a silver Fulvia Coupé. The pair would cruise the King's Road in the little Lancia in search of company, the combination of the car and Neil's flow of chat-up lines apparently resulting in a high success rate. Then again, Neil was a popular lad: his tales of touring Scotland in his Mini with three Aussie sisters has overtures of a *Confessions* film starring Robin Askwith, but I doubt the details will get past the editor's red pen. To borrow Neil's favourite phrase, wait for the DVD to come out.

From top: Martin can't quite get to grips with the Fulvia Berlina's Brutalist styling; quirky Sport Zagatos used to be cheap, but prices have now hardened

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Letter of the month

Above, clockwise: finished police 'cars'; complex twin steering gear; bodies in build; night shoot on set. Right: taxi's 2CV innards revealed; tricky to drive

CITROËN'S FORWARD THINKER GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE

Your article in the November issue on the Citroën CX brought back memories of a project that made much use of the model's attributes.

My special-effects company was asked in 1996 to build futuristic vehicles for a Channel 4 production called *Cold Lazarus*, a Dennis Potter science-fiction drama starring Albert Finney. The commission was for three futuristic police troop-carriers. In the original story they were hover vehicles, so the wheels were to be taken out in post-production. My concept was to have independent four wheel steering, which would contribute to the hover attributes and be multi-directional.

After plenty of head-scratching and research, the plan was to use CX mechanicals throughout. With the compact front-wheel-drive system and hydropneumatic suspension to give a floaty feel, it had the added advantage of lowering (like present-day buses) as hover vehicles would when they stop. The front- and rear-wheel steering meant that we needed six front subframes, three with working engines and three from scrapped cars with usable front ends.

We built our own box-section chassis and hand-laid the body in glassfibre, all in-house. To control the two axles, we came up the simple solution of two steering wheels. Simple, but a nightmare to get your head around – like rubbing your two tummies and two heads at once!

We certainly had fun testing them, crabbing and pirouetting up and down the industrial-estate roads near the factory.

The filming took place around Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station, the concrete lattices of the bases of the giant cooling towers giving a suitable backdrop. For one scene, the police vehicles had to circle an entrance and stop with a pneumatic troop door opening as it came to a halt. Another required the vehicles to rush through giant hopper bays with only inches to spare on either side of the columns. Ashamedly it was yours truly who, struggling to line up the vehicle with the double steering, managed to scrape the coachwork on the first run.

Sadly, but as is usual, following all of that work there was no use for the vehicles after filming. One does still exist, somewhere in Leighton Buzzard – I believe it is for sale.

As a postscript, we also built five futuristic taxis for the same show, still featuring four-wheel steering and still using Citroën ingenuity, but in the shape of 2CVs this time.

Tom Harris BSc
Approved SFX Supervisor (Film)

Letter of the month wins a top motoring title worth up to £150 (including postage), courtesy of Hortons Books. Founded in 1997 by father-and-son Mike and Ben, and now run by Ben and wife Jennifer, Hortons is a leading expert in new, used and out-of-print motoring literature, with some 12,000 books and brochures in stock.

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Lifting the lid

A line in your recent *Triumph Legends* special edition reminded me of my youth: 'Slicing the roof off Canley's latest model was little more complicated than taking a tin-opener to it.'

My friend Eddie Bower had a Triumph when we were in our late teens, albeit a Toledo not a Herald. It was a bit rotten and not going to pass its next MoT test, and Eddie fancied a convertible, so we took the roof off with a petrol-powered Stihl cut-off saw. It took barely 10 minutes and the sparks almost set fire to Nick's mum's curtains –

someone, somewhere, has photos of the roof removal in progress. We drove around in it like that for a week or so, then the car was scrapped. Life was simpler then.

Tim Dickson
Via email

Memorable music

After reading of Aaron McKay's aural encounter with a Ferrari F355 (*Classified pick*, September), I experienced something similarly unforgettable. I had decided to attend a local car show on a sunny Sunday, and I hummed through the Surrey countryside in my little EV. A mile or two after leaving a village I turned on to a long, straight, empty road. As I bumbled along, enjoying the journey, I casually glanced in the mirror and saw, of all things, a Ford GT40. My window was lowered so I heard it loudly and clearly, too.

I was revelling in its hard-edged exhaust note, so moved over and indicated that he should overtake while giving it the berries… He did not disappoint, dropping a couple of gears before letting fly. The car was a speck in the distance before I heard the snarling overrun.

At the event I caught up with the owner, an affable bloke who was happy to talk to me about his car – 1965 build, '66 registration and very nicely turned out: just the thing for a trip to the shops. As we exchanged farewells, I thanked him for The Overtake.

Peter Webb
Shalford, Surrey

Pedant of the month

Pedant of the month wins a *C&SC* baseball cap. Send your observations to *alastair.clements@haymarket.com*

As a regular reader and an admirer of pre-1990 Ferraris, I enjoyed your article on the 275 series (October). While in no way meant as a criticism, I'm curious to know where you got the details relating to how many cars were built?

I have a well-thumbed copy of Mark Konig's *Ferrari: The Legend*, which is my marque bible owing to the author's extensive and in-depth Ferrari background. In it, he details the numbers of each model produced, which, in two cases, differ from those stated in your article. The GTB is put at 456 cars (you say 450), the GTS is the same at 200 and the GTB/4 is 350, plus 10 NART Spyders (you say 330).

Rupert Anson

Comments & clarifications

Thanks for a fine article on the Ford F-1 (August), but the famous Ford script on the tailgate is not Henry Ford's signature. It was the design of Childe Harold Wills, who worked as a metallurgist for Ford before leaving to build his own very fine car, the Wills Sainte Claire, from 1921-'27.

Robert Young

The story on the Southport Classic and Speed Sprint Revival (*News*, November) is somewhat flawed. The track on Southport's seafront is around 16 miles from the Aintree Grand Prix circuit; the current iteration takes place on a section of the 1960s track at which Brian Redman was a class winner.

Steve Wilkinson

The ancient Marina

I see that Martin Buckley is one of those who knock the poor Marina (*Backfire*, October), as he describes its underpinnings as 'archaic'. I've noticed that motor noters deride the Marina for having Minor front suspension, yet nobody criticises Mk1 and Mk2 Escorts for having Mk1 Consul/Zephyr suspension.

The Morris suspension has the same geometry as a wishbone set-up. If only BMC/Leyland had been a bit more adventurous with the location of the pivot points – but then the front of the car would have outcornered the back.

My Marina, which I hammered mercilessly over 10 years, was an early Australian-built model with the sohc 1748cc engine. Very undersquare (3in bore, 3.77in stroke), it had lots of torque but could rev out to 6500rpm when similar units from General Motors and Ford were redlined at 6000.

It did lean in corners and, after it ran out of travel at the left front over a bump in a fast right-hander, I fitted an anti-roll bar. Later, uprated front and rear dampers gave it handling as good as any mainstream saloon of the day.

It only let me down twice: once when water got into the distributor and once, after well over 100,000 miles, when the main leaf in a rear spring broke. It was fun to drive

and only a lack of money to fix issues caused by my mistreatment of the car made me get rid of it.

The Marina traversed Australia from Perth to Canberra (3700km) three times without missing a beat. It was called on to tow a Clubmans car and a four-berth caravan, but heaviest were three trailer-loads of gravel, at 23cwt each. The Morris pulled them all quite happily.

The most annoying thing was its appetite for plugs and points. I was told the SU carb would be trouble and I did have to tune it... once, after 85,000 miles. I even won a motorkhana, ahead of an Escort and a Mini. The Marina had its faults, but it was a practical little car and mine served me well.

Robert Campbell
South Guildford, Western Australia

Swede chariots

I always read Martin Buckley's columns first, but I found his anti-Saab diatribe in November's *Deals on wheels* somewhat surprising. Maybe he produced it after his problematic outing in his Ro80.

Saabs were built to be as safe as possible, by the standards of the time, and statistics from surveys in Sweden and the USA support this. As the owner of more than 20 Saabs across 30 years, I always found them enjoyable to drive and really good at covering the ground faster and more comfortably than the performance figures suggest. As for 'vaguely eco', Saabs were built to last and pioneered safety features such as side-impact bars, reactive head restraints, headlamp wash/wipe and others.

Try a 900 Turbo 16, Martin, but not just for a few hours – the motor will last for 200,000 miles, unlike the Ro80's. And, no, I wouldn't be seen dead in a polo-neck sweater!

Andrew RM Maw
Via email

All-American zero

I read with interest your review of American 'compacts' (August) – the Ford Pinto, and AMC Gremlin and Pacer – but the assertion that these cars 'led America's response to the threat of imported European compacts' is misleading. First, in US terminology, these cars and the Chevy Vega were 'subcompacts'. The Chevy Nova, Ford Maverick/Falcon, Dodge Dart/Plymouth Valiant and AMC Hornet were what we called 'compacts'.

Second, I'd venture that the Pinto and Vega led the response. While the Gremlin might have been first to market, look at the sales figures: Pinto, three million; Vega, two million; AMCs combined 900,000. In those years, Pintos and Vegas were EVERYWHERE. The AMCs, especially the Pacer, were infrequently seen novelties.

Third, I suspect a more accurate threat in this 1970s response was Japanese, not European. The VW Beetle had been around for over a decade by the time the Pinto, Vega (below) and AMCs arrived. It was in the late '60s that the increasingly popular Japanese subcompacts took off in the USA, prompting the Pinto/Vega/Gremlin response.

In your story there wasn't a Vega in sight, but the car had such dire shortcomings it's difficult to find one 50 years later in the USA, let

alone Europe. From the start, the aluminium engine block doomed each car to a short, troubled life. I recall a conversation in the '70s between my engineer father and our neighbour, Alan, a salesman for Champion Spark Plugs. Alan said that when his firm looked at the Vega at launch, they said the block was good for no more than 50,000 miles. With all the black smoke coming from Vega tailpipes by the mid-'70s, you wonder how many of them made it that far.

Cam Sorrell
Via email

Flat to the four

Having worked in the technical department of Volkswagen GB Ltd in the '70s, and having been a VW Type 2 owner for 25 years, I feel I must comment on the piece about Aaron McKay's camper (*Our classics*, November). First, while I enjoyed the humorous engine warming-up procedure Aaron mentions, we always impressed on owners that the correct way to do this with an air-cooled model is to drive in as high a gear as possible, preferably up a hill, thus making the engine work hard while the fan is running slowly.

Second, the correct contact points gap is 0.04mm (0.016in) – I suspect Aaron has put the two figures the wrong way round.

Finally, air-cooled VWs have an unfortunate reputation for engine fires, caused by petrol being sprayed from faulty fuel systems, which is why the specialists sell a gas-filled fire extinguisher to mount above the engine. Aaron has sensibly replaced his fuel hoses, but I hope he didn't install that plastic disposible filter in the engine bay because these can split open with disastrous results. The best place for the filter is under the vehicle, well away from hot components such as the exhaust.

Roger Bateman
Via email

One-upmanship

Having been a member of the Citroën UK field management team from 1977-'85, I enjoyed Andrew Roberts' feature on the Citroën CX (November), which brought back many memories.

As a driver of a company GS and GSA, I looked with envy at senior management in their CXs. I recall the dealer launch of the Athena and Reflex, held at one of the big hotels on the Bath Road near Heathrow. The hotel was chosen not only because of its location, but also for its large car park, which was necessary for the pre-registered dealer demonstrators to be collected after the event.

Things didn't start well because the weather, along with the high level of aviation fuel in the air, was

causing an oily film to form on the cars. The situation did not improve when some dealers found out they had been allocated a Reflex and others an Athena – the former lacked central locking and electric front windows, and had a four-speed 'box. Further adding to the problem was how lovely Athenas looked in metallic blue, compared to the non-metallic Reflex.

For a long time, several dealers complained that they had been discriminated against. Perhaps not surprisingly, when I did get a company CX it was a Reflex!

Bob Lendon
West Sussex

Culture clash

I don't think in more than 40 years of reading your magazine I have ever before felt moved to write, but I must take gentle issue with Mr Roberts for a reference in November's Citroën CX story.

As a Southampton Teddy Boy – who, incidentally, owned a Farina Morris Oxford until I replaced it with a Series II Cowley – hankering still for rock 'n' roll, I do not find it at all remarkable that I should exist alongside the Modernist products of Quai de Javel. Indeed, while it was still fairly new I ran a GSA (above) alongside my Zephyrs and Zodiacs in the early 1980s; I have never since possessed anything so recently registered, but it was a memorable car.

Andrew's demographic reference is something I have come to expect from Mr Buckley, but he was busy annoying Saab owners this month...

Trevor Chambers
Via email

Gallic idiosyncrasy

In 1974, as a young graduate trainee at a now extinct cash-and-carry business in Birmingham, I recall the training manager had a huge white Citroën CX estate (November). I never got to drive it – I got a humble, but still very welcome, Escort 1.3L – but I do recall him extolling its virtues and also its idiosyncrasies.

Somewhat at odds with your article, he commented on the unusual way the steering wheel didn't self-centre. He also said it took him a while to get used to the non-self-cancelling indicators. Sadly, I cannot now recall his name, but I do remember him telling me that his father was the designer responsible for the 'Austin of England' script that graced the rear of the Austin A30!

Graham Wistow
Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

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1970 Ferrari Daytona Comp. GR-IV #13855

A very rare Ferrari Daytona GR-IV entered in the 1972 24H of Le Mans. Converted into a Daytona GR-IV Competition by Sport Auto Diena & Silingardi (Modena) in 1972 for the official US Ferrari importer Chinetti (N.A.R.T.) under the supervision of the Ferrari Factory Assistenza Sportiva and engineer Gaetano Florini. The bodywork was modified to GR-IV by Carrozzeria Auto Sport Bachelli & Villa. The car was entered in 1972 24H of le Mans by Chinetti's N.A.R.T. with racers Jean-Pierre Jarier and Claude Buchet under the number #38 and finished a very successful 9th OA and 5th in Class. Jarier launched his Formula One career with this car. Chinetti was impressed by his skill and offered him to race in the American Championship. After the 24H of Le Mans the car was revised by the Ferrari factory and later sold by Chinetti to the French Collector Tortora. In 1974 the car was sold by Tortora to Jean Verchère (F) who kept it for 20 years. Sold to the UK in 1994 and restored by DK Engineering between 1994-95.
In 1997 it was sold to the present owner in Switzerland where it still remains. It was maintained by Graber Sportgarage and Sportgarage Ruch for the past 28 year and entered for several years in the "Shell Historic Ferrari Challenge". After a major engine damage in 2000, it received a new Piet Roelofs engine bloc. The original bloc comes with the car as well as a gearbox and other spare parts. The car is road registered and tax paid in Switzerland. It comes with a detailed Massini report, a FIVA pass, many pictures and documents as well as his Ferrari Classiche Certificate. **Price on request**

1965 Bizzarrini 5300 GT America

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Mini Cooper MK1 998 cc

finished in Almond green with an old English white roof and Porcelain green and Dove grey interior. 1964 B registration. Supplied with a Heritage certificate confirming that this is a matching numbers home market car in its original specification. It retains the original body shell which has been wonderfully restored.

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1983 Maserati Merak SS. 51,000 miles

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Jaguar XK140 SE FHC 1955

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TO B OR NOT TO B?

That is the question members of the *C&SC* team have tried to answer with six alternatives to the default classic choice

WORDS ***C&SC* TEAM** PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX EDLESTON**

Certain models come to define a genre. Think supercar and a Countach will likely spring to mind; think vintage, it's probably a Le Mans Bentley; and luxury surely means Rolls-Royce (or Cadillac, if you're across the Atlantic). And here in the UK, the venerable MGB has become almost the dictionary definition of a classic, introducing legions of new enthusiasts to the pleasures and the pitfalls of living with old cars. But is it still the best? Our team set out to pick alternatives without being bound by era or genre, but there were two key provisos: first, it had to offer as much fun as a B, and it had to fall within a nominal budget of £8-17,000 – about what you can expect to pay for a nice but not necessarily perfect MG. There are no slings and arrows to be suffered by the noble B here, because we've brought along an example to fight its corner, with each car rated each on a series of criteria covering practicality, driver reward and *cognoscenti* appeal. We hope it gives an opportunity, perchance, to dream…

MGB

Familiarity breeds contempt, and that's the only reason the poor B has such a low rating for *Cars & Coffee factor* on our scorecard (right). But classic snobs be damned, because one of the very many reasons why this little roadster's popularity has endured for so long is that it is so remarkably unremarkable: this is not a scary vehicle to buy or own, and is part of a large and hugely welcoming community that will be there to hold your hand as you make your first tentative steps into classic ownership.

Surely few at MG's Abingdon works could have predicted what a smash hit they had on their hands when the MGB arrived in 1962 to replace the lovely but archaic MGA. The new car was handsome, sporty and fun, yet at the same time affordable, simple and practical. While its predecessor had looked modern after the vintage-style T-series line, the B really was forward-thinking with its monocoque structure by Pressed Steel and clean, Renault Floride-influenced lines.

Clockwise from main: enough performance to be fun; neat blanking plate; former owner Al relives his youth

Underneath that fresh skin things got a bit more conventional. The all-iron, overhead-valve B-series engine remained, albeit upped to 1798cc and initially in three-bearing form, but with a stronger five-bearing bottom end from 1964. Suspension was by wishbones at the front (with the lever-arm dampers as the upper links) and an ultra-conventional leaf-sprung live axle at the rear. There were disc brakes up front, but with only 95bhp to worry about it didn't really need any more, and it was gutsy enough to comfortably top 100mph.

Fortunately, if the standard roadster isn't to your liking there's a whole *smörgåsbord* of MGB flavours to discover. The flourish of Pininfarina created the lovely 2+2 coupé BGT in 1965, there was a potent straight-six for the MGC and GT two years later, and the light but powerful Rover V8 was eventually slotted in – to the GT only, sadly – in 1973. That final iteration was prompted by the non-factory V8 conversions of Ken Costello, one of a multitude of specialists to see the potential and the appeal of the B, and to decide to focus on it. A whole industry has sprung up around this model, making it one of the easiest classics of all to own even 45 years after it finally went off sale under British Leyland's ownership in 1980. You really can build a brand-new MGB from scratch – though I wouldn't recommend it, because you can buy a truly lovely one on which someone else has already done all the hard work for a fraction of the cost, particularly if you are willing to go for the less coveted 'rubber'-bumper run-out models. Much was made of these anachronistic latecomers, with their raised ride heights and black, polyurethane-coated impact beams at each end, but all they do is open up the market today: I've had two of them, by the way, and can confirm that the appeal is undimmed.

The picture-perfect B, however, is surely something like our featured car. In Tartan Red on gleaming chrome wires, Petula Cornwall's lovely 1966 MkII is a real sweet spot, gaining many of the practicalities of the later cars – most notably the five-bearing engine and a proper hood that actually folds, rather than having to play around with sticks and canvas – yet retains the pure look and feel of the early ones (and costs a fair whack less). If you're tempted it is currently available via Beech Hill Garage (beechhillgarage.com) for somewhere in the middle of our nominal budget.

On a clear, crisp morning such as this I can't think of many cars I'd rather be driving – not least because getting into it is like putting on a favourite coat. With its large boot, broad cabin and long footwells there are few more accommodating sports cars in the world, particularly if (like me) you are above 6ft tall, and very much built for comfort and not for speed. The same is true, to an extent, for the MG. Our undulating, twisting test track does show up its shortcomings as a circuit weapon – even if, in period, it was a competent competition car, taking multiple category wins in both endurance racing and rallying. The red zone on the rev counter starts at 5500rpm but the pushrod B-series motor has already done most of its best work by 4000, and the car feels soft and heavy as it squeals its way through tight left-right sequences, gently rolling into oversteer on the way out.

Remember that this was a car honed on Berkshire B-roads, drive accordingly and it all comes together. It builds and retains pace effortlessly, accompanied by that distinctively MG exhaust rasp, and you soon find yourself revelling in its easy pace, flicking in and out of overdrive for corners, enjoying the weighty fluidity of is rack-and-pinion steering as the wind whips your hair and your grin broadens.

Talk to just about any classic enthusiast and chances are there's an MGB in their backstory. The odds are equally good that the mention will raise a wistful smile and memories of great drives, shoestring repairs and friendly faces. 'Twas ever thus, and ever thus shall be. **AC**

ALTERNATIVES

FIAT 124 SPORT SPIDER Pricier today, but very much Italy's answer to the B, with similar proportions given a Tom Tjaarda flourish. Technically a step ahead, with discs, a five-speed 'box and a sparkling twin-cam in 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 and 2.0 forms from 1966-'85, latterly as the Pininfarina Spider.

SUNBEAM ALPINE Launched in 1959, the Alpine feels a generation older than the MG and lags behind in performance until the most potent 1725cc Series V from 1965, but has charm in spades and prices compare well to the B. Pronounced fins of the Series I were progressively clipped.

BUYING TIPS

- Rust in the sills is critical – replacing all three parts is very expensive. Also check inner wings, A-posts, bulkhead, floors and rear chassis legs
- Modification is almost universal, and very much to taste so check you're happy with what's been done, and that the spec is what it claims to be
- Mechanicals are tough, but look out for engine knocks and leaks; worn gearbox synchros; seized calipers; suspension wear, leaks and tired bushes

'On a clear, crisp morning I can't think of many cars I'd rather be driving: it's like putting on a favourite coat'

SCORECARD
Value for money **4/5**
Ease of maintenance **5/5**
Parts availability **5/5**
Practicality/usability **4/5**
Driver appeal **3/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **2/5**
TOTAL 23/30

'Your mother wouldn't like it,' said BMC's ads, pushing the B's sexy image. Below, from left: torquey B-series; non-standard wood-rim wheel

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1965-'80/c500,000 (all)
Engine ohv 1798cc 'four', twin SU carbs
Max power 95bhp @ 5400rpm
Max torque 110lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission four-speed manual, optional overdrive, RWD
Weight 2028lb (920kg) **Mpg** 29
0-60mph 11.5 secs **Top speed** 106mph
Price new £1217 **Price now** £8-17,000

'Once you attune to the V4's zingy character and its crisp throttle response, the Fulvia starts to make sense'

SCORECARD
Value for money **2/5**
Ease of maintenance **2/5**
Parts availability **3/5**
Practicality/usability **4/5**
Driver appeal **5/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **5/5**
TOTAL 21/30

Italian-market Fulvia 3 has lower-set lights. Below, from left: grown-up cabin with mini-GT feel; canted V4 has a real appetite for revs

FACTFILE

Sold/no built 1965-'76/134,035 (all)
Engine sohc 1298cc V4, two twin-choke Solex carburettors
Max power 90bhp @ 6000rpm
Max torque 84lb ft @ 4500rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, FWD
Weight 2050lb (930kg) **Mpg** 27
0-60mph 13 secs **Top speed** 105mph
Price new £2177
Price now £15-20,000 (Fulvia 3)

LANCIA FULVIA COUPÉ

With the Fulvia Coupé, Lancia realised (too late, as it turned out) how it might retain some form of independence, with a car that was as chic and elegant as its saloon basis was sober and austere. It was one of the few well-judged commercial moves of the Pesenti/Fessia era, a timelessly classic 'personal luxury' coupé in miniature that reinvigorated the firm's competition profile (Fulvias won the Italian rally championship every year but one between 1965 and 1973, and the 1972 Rallye Monte-Carlo against far more potent German opposition), while notching up sufficient sales to keep Lancia if not solvent, then at least commercially functional.

From 1965-'76 Fulvia Coupés found more than 134,000 homes – latterly in Fulvia 3 form, as here, supplementing the Beta Coupé for a clientele who were not ready to accept the implications of a Lancia powered by a Fiat engine. Sales were strong until the end in June 1976, when the last Coupé came off the line at Chivasso. Indeed, sales of the Fulvia 3, with its cloth trim, plastic steering wheel, white-faced dials and built-in headrests, often outstripped those of the newly launched two-door Beta.

The Fulvia has a complex production history too lengthy to recount in full here; suffice to say that the Series 1s were the four-speed cars with big headlights that ran from 1965-'70; Series 2s had a narrower grille, smaller lights and five gears. The Fulvia 3 was really a run-out edition of the S2. In the UK, the S2/3 had raised outer headlamps to conform with local regulations.

Not including the Zagato-bodied Sports, the Tipo 818 Fulvia Coupé spawned nine different versions (or 11 if you include special editions), with power outputs ranging from 80bhp in the original 1.2 to 130bhp in the high-compression 1969-'70 1.6HF. The heavily canted narrow-angle V4 maintained an engineering tradition that had its origins in the Lambda, while embracing the front-wheel-drive rationalism of Prof Antonio Fessia. His 1960 Flavia was a car of sober refinement and homely looks that is hard to reconcile with the sporty Fulvia, yet they shared many details, including transverse-leaf front suspension, four-wheel discs, and a subframe to cradle the beautifully cast engine and transaxle gearbox.

Clockwise from main: angular yet elegant profile; our Italian correspondent; Fulvia 3 was a run-out model

Here was a car that managed to combine the Lancia ethos of superb detail quality and driver appeal into a machine that was all about fun and satisfaction for those who knew how to extract the best from it. At the heart of its appeal was a neat, upright body styled in-house by Pietro Castagnero: with its chopped-off tail, concave rear window and angular roofline it remains a timeless classic that, alongside the Aprilia, Aurelia B20 and Stratos, endures as an all-purpose image of what a Lancia really is. While larger models of the '60s dabbled in all kinds of eccentric dashboard designs, the Fulvia's neat, elegant, asymmetric fascia was as much of an instant classic as the bodywork, and the stylists left it pretty much alone for the 11 years of the model's production. It was no coincidence that Lancia alighted on the Fulvia Coupé as the subject for its 2003 retro concept car – perhaps the greatest missed opportunity to reinvent itself for the new millennium.

Comparisons with the MGB are hard to draw because the Fulvia was more expensive, front-drive and only available as a snug 2+2. However, closer analysis reveals that by 1974 the Fulvia was only £300 adrift of a BGT and had roughly comparable pace: neither could quite break the 110mph barrier, although at 30mpg-plus the Italian was much more sparing with fuel.

Finished in Rosso York, this beautiful four-owner, LHD Fulvia 3 was brought to the UK by Tony Rosewell of Fulvia Classics (fulviaclassics.com). Steeped in all things Lancia and with good Italian contacts, he has imported 250 Fulvias since setting up his Hertfordshire firm.

Like most 'real' Lancias, the Fulvia will not necessarily reveal its charms during a brief trial run, and not everyone will get on with it. The V4 doesn't pull well below 2000rpm, the steering feels ponderous at low speeds, and the gearchange is hard to negotiate smoothly with its dog-leg first and notchy, long-throw action. Yet the ratios, with a direct fifth plus a low first and second, prove to be well-spaced and, once you attune to the V4's zingy character and crisp throttle response, the car begins to make sense. With a choke for each cylinder and a relatively high compression ratio, it sings towards the 6500rpm redline with a snorting roar, and you soon learn the gears are there to be used freely. Any impression of flabbiness in the steering is cast aside, the handling becomes neutral in all but the tightest curves, and you search in vain for ways to unsettle the little Lancia's stability and sense of purpose. It even rides well on its narrow tyres.

It feels almost exotic: refined, yet somehow cheeky at the same time. Once it has been sampled, it is hard to see how anyone would ever again be content to drive an MGB. **MB**

ALTERNATIVES

FIAT 124 SPORT COUPÉ Fiat employed more conventional rear-drive running gear for the 1967-'74 124 Coupé, and its performance is very similar to the Fulvia, despite the Lancia being more expensive when new. Rarity makes the Fiat harder to find parts for today, however.

ALFA ROMEO GT JUNIOR Another stellar-handling beauty from Italy powered by a small, fizzing twin-cam, the 1965-'76 105-series GT Junior has become the market's favourite. As a result, they are up to twice or three times the purchase cost of an equivalent Fulvia today.

BUYING TIPS

- Check the engine for a noisy timing chain, low oil pressure and head-gasket leaks. A rebuild won't be cheap on this relatively exotic motor
- Special factory tools are required for what you might think are simple DiY jobs, such as changing the wheel bearings
- Fulvias rust, but no more than anything of the period. Reproduction panels are available

AUSTIN SEVEN SPECIAL

Four supercharged Sevens lined up on the startline of the Ards circuit on 17 August 1929. Record-breaking heroics at Montlhéry, victories at Brooklands and a 790-mile reliability run had proved the baby Austin was up to scratch, but success at the Ulster RAC Tourist Trophy would be the cherry on top. Ahead lay 30 gruelling laps of the closed-road circuit linking the towns of Comber, Newtownards and Dundonald.

The plucky underdogs got a head start on the rest of the field, which included Bentleys, Alfas and Bugattis, and the Austins fought amongst themselves in the opening laps. Despite heavy downpours, the lead pair was soon clocking 60mph-plus tours, but Rudi Caracciola's Mercedes SS and Giuseppe Campari's Alfa Romeo 6C closed in. The German and Italian cars were first and second, but Austin drivers Archie Frazer-Nash and SV Holbrook crossed the line in third and fourth respectively, heading a top-four lock-out in the 750cc category.

More high-profile victories and speed records followed, but the County Down win triggered a run of 'Ulster' road cars, available with or without a supercharger. The car that democratised motoring in the early '20s was kick-starting its next chapter with a model that could compete with the best, but was within reach for most. Its success on both the world stage and at grassroots secured the Ulster's popularity well beyond its two-year production run, leading to countless replicas and Specials.

Even today, the little Austin's performance at the 1929 Ulster TT continues to inspire: "I've always been fascinated by exploration and travel," says owner James Moon. "Because of that, I love vintage racing cars and what people did in the early days of motorsport." He shares this superb Ulster replica with his father, Adrian. It started life as a standard Seven saloon, but was first turned into a Special not long after WW2. "The previous owner referred to the first conversion as 'Ulster-esque'," says car designer Adrian. "It was a rather crude two-seater body." Today, it's a very authentic homage to the TT racers, having been rebuilt in the 1990s with aluminium bodywork by Roach and a remote linkage for the three-speed 'box. "For me, it was important that it wasn't just something that looked like an Ulster, but was true to the works cars from 1930," says James. "It's a pocket rocket and I think it's absolutely beautiful." In truth, James and Adrian's pristine example is well out of our budget – you'd need to spend upwards of £20,000 to land a replica anywhere near as good as this; however, there are plenty of highly usable Seven Specials, Ulsters or otherwise, well within reach.

Clockwise from main: little power, but thrills aplenty; elegant tail; Ryan's grin betrays the Seven's fun factor

Unless you're planning to use your classic every day and throughout the winter, then why not consider something a little more leftfield? Admittedly, in our line-up of MGB alternatives the Austin is clearly the brave-pill option. For a start, all of the other cars have doors; in the Seven, you hop over the cut-outs and shimmy your way down into the snug cabin – you don't so much sit in the Ulster as wear it. Despite its tiny capacity, this is the loudest car here, too: push the starter, and the sidevalve 'four' jumps into life and settles into a not-inconspicuous idle. Engage the pushbutton clutch in the tight pedalbox and select first with the short, stubby lever. There's no synchromesh, so you need to be cautious, but get it right and you're rewarded with a short-throw shift that could be hooked up to a distant ancestor of the Mazda MX-5's snickety 'box. Malcolm Campbell managed 94.06mph in a rebodied supercharged Ulster at Daytona Beach, and while this unblown replica can't quite manage that, the sensation of speed is laugh-out-loud fun – even though I'm barely touching 35mph on our test track's short straight.

Unless you are part of the Vintage Sports-Car Club fraternity, it's easy to view racing cars of this era as museum pieces, stories of the fearless pioneers who raced them existing only in books, archive images and our imaginations. But get behind the wheel of one and those black-and-white photographs spring into life – and the full-colour experience makes you appreciate the bravery of those early racers even more.

In many ways, the Seven is the polar opposite of the MGB: one is a relaxed cruiser, the other a pint-sized screamer, at its best when it's being revved hard and wrestled through a series of bends, revelling in its thrummy, race-inspired soundtrack. So while the MGB is the practical choice (even if the Ulster has a surprisingly large 'boot' in the boat-tail rear), the Austin is certainly the most evocative. Sure, if it rains you'll get cold and wet, you need to have your wits about you on the road, and you must even dress sensibly – Adrian advises dodging cow pies, or you'll end up with it splattered up your arm. But nip out for a pint of milk on a Sunday morning and you'll find yourself skipping the local shop to drive to the next one. Then the next one, and the next. The Seven turns every trip into an adventure you won't want to end. **RS**

ALTERNATIVES

MORGAN 4-4 Morgan's first crack at a four-wheeler set the template for the Malvern maker, and you can pick one up for not much more than an Ulster rep. Early models have a Coventry Climax engine and later 4/4s use a Standard motor – as does the more powerful Plus Four from 1950.

MG M-TYPE The first-generation MG 'Midget' was on sale at the same time as the Austin Seven, although its 1929 release meant that it nabbed the title of the first affordable sports car... just. It enjoyed plenty of motorsport success, too, plus you can get one for similar money.

BUYING TIPS

- Inherently, every Austin Seven Special will be different, so do your research to find out just how authentic the car in question is
- The 747cc engine isn't long-lasting, especially if driven hard. Parts are prevalent, but budget for work if the most recent rebuild was long ago
- The three-speed gearbox has no syncromesh, so you need to double-declutch. A worn 'box will be noisy, so listen out for rattles on a test drive

'Get behind the wheel and those black-and-white photos spring into life – with a full-colour experience'

SCORECARD
Value for money **2/5**
Ease of maintenance **4/5**
Parts availability **4/5**
Practicality/usability **2/5**
Driver appeal **5/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **4/5**
TOTAL 21/30

Ulster's mini-racer looks have inspired plenty of imitators. Below, from left: simple 747cc 'four'; tight cockpit limits the market

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1930-'32/168 (Ulster)
Engine sidevalve 747cc 'four', Solex carburettor
Max power 24bhp @ 4500rpm
Max torque n/a
Transmission three-speed manual, RWD
Weight c952lb (432kg) **Mpg** 40
0-60mph 24 secs **Top speed** 60mph
Price new £185 (1930)
Price now £10-25,000

'Lightness is key: it's built from steel so thin that you'll swear you can hear it flexing away like a baking tray'

SCORECARD
Value for money **2/5**
Ease of maintenance **4/5**
Parts availability **4/5**
Practicality/usability **5/5**
Driver appeal **5/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **4/5**
TOTAL 24/30

Cheeky face reflects 205's pugnacious character. Below, from left: 'phase 1.5' car has pre-facelift exterior with '88 dash update; muscular 1.9

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1986-'94/332,924 (all GTIs)
Engine sohc 1905cc 'four', Bosch LE2-Jetronic fuel injection
Max power 128bhp @ 6000rpm
Max torque 122lb ft @ 4750rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, FWD
Weight 2004lb (910kg) **Mpg** 32
0-60mph 7.8 secs **Top speed** 127mph
Price new £10,295 (1988)
Price now £8-25,000

PEUGEOT 205 GTI

The Peugeot 205 GTI is second only to the MG here in its lack of need for an introduction. You know what it is, and unless you have a closet full of Volkswagen T-shirts, you probably consider it the best hot hatch of all time. There have been faster ones, both in a straight line and in the *g*-forces they can pull in a corner, but none have matched the Peugeot's nimbleness, effervescence and tack-sharp throttle response. The question is whether it deserves to be here.

Sitting as it does, surrounded by cabrios and coupés, the 205 could be unkindly dismissed as a shopping cart doing its best attempt at a sports car with the addition of a bigger engine, flashy wheels and some red striping. But I put it to you that, in the feeling of its controls and the sensation it imparts to the driver, the 205 GTI is better than most sports cars. That it comes with decent carrying capacity is a bonus.

Much of that is thanks to its lightness: glance down to the GTI's kerbweight and you'll see that it is a small person in the passenger seat away from the MGB. Built from steel so thin you'll swear you hear it flexing away like a baking tray, that Peugeot managed to make a car with a roof, back seats and a boot weigh this little in the '80s is an impressive feat – and a point of virtue of the front-drive set-up many enthusiasts will hold against it. There's proper engineering here beyond the flimsy metal, too: the engine is all-aluminium, while the weight- and space-saving independent rear suspension by trailing arms and torsion bars set the standard for the supermini class.

Beyond the spec sheet, however, the secret sauce of the 205 GTI is in the unquantifiable expertise in the tuning of its chassis and controls. Step into one, and the first thing you notice is an engine that revs with virtually no delay after just a look at the throttle. The brakes are similarly keen. It takes adjustment, but gives an impression of urgency and telepathic control. The clutch in this car is particularly heavy, perhaps due a new cable, though all right-hookers suffer the issue to some extent.

Clockwise from main: torsion-bar rear gives nimble feel; happy Charlie; fine vision from huge glass area

A turn of the wheel will bring a grin back to your face. Unassisted in this car, it fizzes with feedback, but more impressive is its response. Another car might take only half a second to react to your input, but the 205 feels that bit faster. It's an addictive experience, making even driving around town at 30mph enjoyable. It's not actually that quick in its steering (at 3.9 turns from lock to lock): the agility is achieved instead by the car's light weight, front-end grip, short overhangs and front-wheel toe out.

These honed responses, as well as a rapid (if slightly long-throw) gearshift, allow the driver of a 205 GTI to revel in the car's lively chassis. Essentially, you've got all the front grip you could ever need and a rear axle that follows like a small child holding the leash of an excitable Great Dane. That creates a hot hatch that resists torquesteer and understeer, the bogeymen of the genre, while delivering real adjustability at the rear. With the extra poke of the 1.9 – as here – it's more pugnacious, though in truth it feels faster than it really is.

The big drawback to the 205 GTI's driving brilliance is that it is so well known, with prices to suit. The nicest cars are now fetching £40k, and Aguttes blew all records out of the water with an exceptional low-miler fetching €82,960 in 2022. As values have increased, however, so has their spread. Rough cars hanging on to an MoT can still be found from about £5000, whereas a perfectly decent car with a mileage the wrong side of 100,000 can be had for £10k, with a premium on 1.9s and rare colours. This car, a smart 1.9 with 188,000 miles but a recent job list longer than your arm, was taken as a part-ex on a Porsche 911 GT3, and is for sale for £15,995.

That popularity does make them easy cars to look after. Peugeot itself now remanufactures some components, including all the interior fabrics and many trim items, while ancillaries, suspension bits and the like are still in stock at regular motor factors. The used-parts community is strong, and restorer Tolman has responded to the extra money surrounding these cars with both a restomod and a range of upgrade parts for the model. Beyond some tight packaging in a few spots in the engine bay, they are very simple cars to work on, too.

The GTI was built in huge numbers, filling the niche left by the MGB GT as an accessible car for the sporty driver, so its comparison today should not be the surprise it may appear as its boxy silhouette looms over the Abingdon staple. I'll concede that the 205 will never have quite the visual charm of a chromed MG in a bright colour on a summer's day, but, were driving with a blindfold possible, I'm confident most would choose the little French nugget. It's not just what I'd buy with MGB cash, it's what I'd buy if I could only drive one car ever again. **CC**

Thanks to *Ashgood Classic & Sportscars (01753 680558; ashgood.co.uk)*

ALTERNATIVES

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI MkII The MkI Golf GTI inspired the 205, but for MGB money you're looking at a MkII. Significantly larger than the Pug, the Golf is more refined, better built and more practical, but less sharp. You should get a lovely 8v at this price point, or a higher-mileage 16v.

ALFA ROMEO ALFASUD TI Gaining a hatchback and a 103bhp, twin-Weber-fed version of its zingy 1.5-litre flat-four in 1982, the Alfasud belatedly became a hot hatch for its final two years. A brilliant handler, but with a ruinous reputation for rust and a high-maintenance engine.

BUYING TIPS

- Peugeot rustproofed the cars well, but sills are corroding now, especially at their ends
- Driveshafts are weak: accelerate on full lock to test them. The clutch is cable-operated and on the heavy side as standard, but a fresh cable can improve things
- The bearings of the torsion-bar rear axle eventually fail, leading to excessive negative camber. A reconditioned axle is c£250 online

FIAT BARCHETTA

There are so many reasons why my choice of a Fiat Barchetta is seriously flawed that I'm now starting to eye up the other cars here with a mixture of longing and envy. Why did I do it? Oh yes, I remember: because the Barchetta is simply one of the prettiest two-seater soft-top roadsters to emerge in recent times.

It was the model's impish good looks that perhaps made Fiat UK so bullish, despite the Barchetta's most obvious drawback in this market. 'WHO CARES IF IT'S LEFT HAND DRIVE?' was the importer's devil-may-care strapline in a contemporary print advert. On the face of it, the Barchetta lived up to its advertising bravado, too. Centro Stile Fiat designer Andreas Zapatinas' inspiration for the Barchetta's lines came in part from Ferrari's 1948 166MM, for which the nickname *barchetta* had also been coined. There were other neat styling references, too: the roadster's flush doorhandles mimicked those on the elegant 1947 Cisitalia Pinin Farina Coupé; and the way the Barchetta's hood stored out of sight beneath a flush, body-coloured panel (without impacting on boot space) was reminiscent of an 850 Spider's arrangement.

Slightly more prosaic was Fiat's front-wheel-drive 'Type B' platform, around which the Barchetta was developed. Bucking the rear-wheel-drive norm in its class, it was to share its underpinnings – albeit on a shorter wheelbase – with the new Punto. Naturally, the roadster's lack of a structural roof meant its chassis was reinforced, with the windscreen frame acting as a rollbar. Uprated springs and dampers also provided a more sporting feel to the whole.

Weighing a snip over a tonne, it mattered little that the 1747cc 16-valve 'four' made just 128bhp. For the first time, Fiat used a phase variator in the intake mechanism to provide variable valve geometry and more rounded performance at any revs. This gave a useful 0-60mph in 8.6 secs and a 118mph maximum.

Driving Richard Lohman's pre-facelift 2001 example (post-'03 models received a restyled nose and some trim/equipment changes), that acceleration figure feels slightly pessimistic. Roof down, you sit low in the Barchetta's cabin facing a chunky, airbag-equipped three-spoke wheel and three white-faced dials in a moulded plastic binnacle. Body-coloured flashes of trim abound, and the decent kit-count includes air conditioning and electric windows.

Clockwise from main: 'little boat' resists understeer admirably; flowing lines; lifelong Fiat fan Simon

Out on the road, perched on the left-hand side of the car as you would be in any Barchetta, the biggest drawback is that you have to choose your moments wisely before overtaking. But everything else gels nicely. Throttle response is crisp and the Fiat's five-speed gearbox, while not as precise as a Mazda MX-5's, is quick and satisfying through shifts. Extending the engine delivers a wholesome rasp from the twin tailpipes, and the performance feels strong. There is a touch of roll through corners (which I like), but the overall body control is tight and well contained, with only a hint of steering-column wobble over broken surfaces.

Unfortunately, owning a Barchetta is not all sunshine and lollipops. Like the MX-5, rust is its bugbear, with the main issues arising from faulty rear hood seals, allowing water to find its way into the footwells and then rotting the floorpan from the inside out. Official UK cars were also plastered with a thick layer of underseal, which can often disguise rusty floor sections. Inner and outer rear wheelarches are other areas to watch for corrosion, too.

Mechanically, the Barchetta's powertrain is fairly robust, save one particular issue. The variator that controls the inlet timing can seize, causing the engine to run badly and sound almost like a diesel. Prevention is better than cure here, and Paul de Turris from Barchetta specialist DTR European Sports Cars suggests replacing the variator – along with the water pump – at every second cambelt change. This is due every three years or 36,000 miles and, while the belt itself is durable, the tensioner can fail – especially in cars that are laid up for long periods.

The other blight of Barchetta ownership is general parts scarcity. While obtaining regular service and mechanical components is rarely a problem, sourcing body panels and light units is becoming increasingly difficult. Replacement rear wings are almost non-existent, but can be fabricated, and front bumpers and headlights are also hard to find (though the latter can often be refurbished). DTR holds a stock of bonnet panels and front wings, but it's gradually being depleted.

On the upside, the Barchetta is served by an excellent owners' club, which has around half of the remaining 500 cars in the UK on its books. It's also a good place to start hunting for what is surely one of the rarest, prettiest and yet most usable cars in this group. **SH**

Thanks to *DTR European Sports Cars (dtrsports.com); Barchetta UK Owners' Club (fiatbarchetta.uk)*

ALTERNATIVES

MAZDA MX-5 (NA) UK-launched in 1990, the first-generation MX-5 reincarnated the traditional rear-drive roadster that MG had abandoned a decade before, but with a new level of build quality and durability. Cheaper and more common than the Fiat, and with better parts supply.

LOTUS ELAN (M100) A front-wheel-drive Elan was an affront to Lotus purists, but its chassis was one of the best in the business. With values on a par with the Fiat today, the Elan's relative rarity and practicality, plus the cachet of its Lotus badge, make it a compelling alternative.

BUYING TIPS

- Rust can write a car off due to a lack of panels, so a thorough inspection is vital. Check jacking points, sill edges and inner/outer rear arches
- The inlet variator is a weak spot, causing the engine to run poorly. Listen out for a diesel-like rattle at c2000rpm, especially on the overrun
- On pre-'96 cars, an improperly folded frame can cut the hood fabric, so check above the side windows and in the lower rear corners for rips

'Throttle response is crisp, delivering a wholesome rasp from the twin tailpipes, and performance is strong'

SCORECARD
Value for money **5/5**
Ease of maintenance **3/5**
Parts availability **2/5**
Practicality/usability **3/5**
Driver appeal **4/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **3/5**
TOTAL 20/30

Pert rump is the pretty Barchetta's best angle. Below, from left: zingy 16v twin-cam; flashes of body colour inside

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1995-2005/57,625
Engine dohc 1747cc 'four', fuel injection
Max power 130bhp @ 6300rpm
Max torque 121lb ft @ 4300rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, FWD
Weight 2328lb (1056kg)
Mpg 28 **0-60mph** 8.6 secs
Top speed 118mph
Price new £14,000 (1998)
Price now £4-10,000

'I'm just standing and staring at the gorgeous result of Italian design meeting German coachbuilding'

SCORECARD
Value for money **2/5**
Ease of maintenance **5/5**
Parts availability **4/5**
Practicality/usability **3/5**
Driver appeal **2/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **4/5**
TOTAL 20/30

Gorgeous styling is the main attraction. Below, from left: much-modified cabin with classic painted dash; uprated flat-four now has twin carbs

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1955-'74/80,877 (Type 14 Convertibles)
Engine ohv 1584cc flat-four, Solex carburettor
Max power 57bhp @ 4400rpm
Max torque 82lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission four-speed manual, RWD
Weight 1918lb (870kg) **Mpg** 26.7
0-60mph 21.3 secs **Top speed** 84mph
Price new £1166 (Coupé, 1960)
Price now £12-35,000

VOLKSWAGEN KARMANN GHIA

That the Karmann Ghia exists at all has more to do with the political machinations of Detroit than you might think. Little did Volkswagen know, but Chrysler and its strong ties to styling house Ghia had several designs floating back and forth across the Atlantic in the early '50s, with the best ones being picked off by stylist Virgil Exner and his team to form the next Chrysler cars. The American firm's D'Elegance concept car of 1952, designed and built by Ghia, had many of the cues we know today in the Type 14 Karmann Ghia, such as the swage line that flows from behind the front wheelarch, along the side then gracefully arcs over the rear wheel to create the top of the rear wing crease. Simply beautiful.

In the background, utilitarian VW was keen to produce an exciting sports car to join the Beetle and Bus as a new member of the family. It approached German coachbuilder Karmann, which was already creating a cabriolet version of the Beetle, to see if it could help. Conveniently, Ghia's design for the D'Elegance was going spare, with Chrysler deciding not to take it, so the photocopier was set to -40% to fit the Beetle floorpan. The concept was then presented to the VW board, who fell in love with it – just as everyone instantly swoons upon seeing a Karmann Ghia for the first time.

Admittedly, this isn't the finest genesis story for creating a sports car to rival the best Europe had to offer. When the first cars rolled off the Osnabrück production line in August 1955, the motoring world was filling up with exciting cars such as the Ford Thunderbird, MGA, Triumph TR3, Mercedes-Benz 190SL, Jaguar Mk1 and Citroën DS, among many others, all incredibly hitting the streets in the same year as VW's Karmann Ghia. It was tough to make any kind of headway in such stylish company.

Whether this little air-cooled beauty is a true sports car is, to be honest, an argument that I'm never going to win. When launched, 36bhp from its flat-four was as much as the Beetle engine could muster, and even in this 1969 version with its later, bigger motor producing a heady 57bhp, performance is sprightly at best.

Clockwise from main: pronounced rearward weight bias; committed 'dubber Damon; beautiful detailing

But searching for speed is to miss the point entirely. Today I'm surrounded by my *C&SC* chums debating their choices and offering arguments about smooth power delivery, perfectly weighted gearchanges and sonorous engine notes. But I'm just standing and staring at the gorgeous result of Italian design meeting German coachbuilding, and revelling in the fact that I have the best-looking car here by a mile, including that little red MGB over there.

However, I do have to stop gazing and start driving at some point. Dropping down into the seat means an impressive change of altitude. With a flat floorpan and low-profile seat, you sit deep within the body looking out over the curvy bonnet/bootlid, which helps give a sense of sportiness – even if the familiar flat-four thrum doesn't exactly set your heart aflutter. Changing gears in an old Volkswagen is often like a game of *Where's Wally?*, with each ratio hiding in there somewhere, but with a simple and commonly used short-shift kit installed here, gears are easily clicked into place.

If you've ever driven an air-cooled VW, the Karmann Ghia provides few surprises. The lower, more streamlined body should mean a better top speed, but with all the molten lead that Karmann used to hand-finish where the curvy panels join together, the weight crept up. The usual skinny-tyred understeer on turn-in shifts to oversteer once the weight of the rear-mounted engine catches up with you, but fear not, you're probably only doing 28mph and well within the speed limit. A sports car this is not, but it does *feel* sporty.

Owning one is equally rewarding, with spares availability being about as easy as it gets thanks to many shared parts with the Beetle – VW specialists carry most mechanical items you'll need for very reasonable prices. Things only get expensive when the dreaded tinworm starts appearing. With hugely costly panels, often only available overseas, it is always best to buy one that has a solid body. Especially if it's one like this – without a roof – which will be substantially more expensive in the first place. Nice Coupés start at around £12,000, but you can add a sunshine premium of c£5000 for an equivalent Cabriolet. Prices vary wildly, with the market skewed by a large number of left-hand-drive US imports, but in the usual VW way it was on sale for a remarkable 20 years, so there are always plenty to choose from.

John Nicholas is the keeper of this 1969 drop-top, and with eight years of ownership under his belt he still reckons it has "one of the sexiest bodies going". Early in his tenure, a trip to Scotland with the owners' club, where it rained every day, meant not only did he find out which seals were missing, but also confirmed how much his wife loved the VW, too. "The brakes could be better," he admits, "but overall it's a cracking car to own." I couldn't agree more. **DC**

ALTERNATIVES

PORSCHE 914 The Karmann Ghia's brother from another mother has a Volkswagen engine mounted amidships, quirky Germanic looks and a targa-style roof. It comes with a more upmarket badge, but shares the same DNA and offers a stylish Teutonic rival to the very British MGB.

NSU SPORT PRINZ Another air-cooled, rear-engined sporty(ish) car, this time penned by rival Italian styling house Bertone and built from 1958-'68. Similarly slow, and even if you can trace one, it'll be trickier still to find parts to keep it puttering along. A bold option, but chic.

BUYING TIPS

- Most Karmann Ghias have been restored several times; quality of workmanship is key, so research firms that have done major work
- Earlier 'low-light' versions are rare, and command more money, but are painfully slow
- The lead-loaded front and rear bodywork is the province of specialist metalworkers only. Walk away from a car laden with filler in these areas – it'll cost a fortune to put it right

PORSCHE 944

As a rational answer to the sports car question of 1976, the original Porsche 924 fulfilled most of what the genre's buyers had come to expect in a post-Datsun 240Z world. Practical, relatively affordable and great to drive, its only crime has been one of muddled identity: was it a Volkswagen orphan or an adopted Porsche? Developed out of the best of that car, the 944 confidently shut down such arguments in favour of Stuttgart, went on to sell more than 163,000 units and has gracefully aged into a classic with the same sort of broad appeal behind the MGB's enduring popularity.

From a mile away, the 944 is so obviously a sports car, revealing some of the 1980s' greatest hits of performance styling as you get closer. The pop-up headlights accentuate the long bonnet and wedge-shaped profile, while flared wheelarches and a deep, wraparound rear spoiler denote this as 'the one with the Porsche engine'. There are Teledial alloy wheels, supplementary driving lamps and, inside, an array of serious-looking dials and low-set seats – both out of a 911, if that matters. Apart from the pinstripe trim fitted to so many examples – including 'our' 1988 eight-valve Lux, which market expert John Mayhead has owned for 12 years – the interior is a little austere, but time has lent it some charm: the scattered, clunky plastic controls and divisive steering wheel are part of its '80s Porsche identity.

To John's 22-year-old son, Freddie, the 944 is a world apart from his modern hatchback: "It immediately feels different, purposeful, and I like how everything is easy to use and built to last. You sit so low and the steering has real weight to it. The whole car really involves you."

With a perfectly in-line driving position and a sense that you're sitting right in the middle of the car, there is a natural focus to the 944 even as you saunter off from a standstill. Yet it is so easy: the big, double-counterbalanced 2479cc 'four' is smooth, flexible; the transaxle 'box is positive, slick; and the all-independent, long-travel suspension is forgiving and controlled.

Clockwise from main: practical hatchback rear; '80s cliché pop-ups; Aaron searches for his inner yuppie

It doesn't take long before you're planting your right foot and seeing just what this thing can do, which is a lot. The first 924s danced on 165mm-wide tyres, but the 944 can sink its 205/55 front and 225/50 rear Pirelli P7s into the Tarmac and fly through corners at a rate that would leave many moderns far behind. The steering, throttle and brakes have a weighty precision about them, and inspire measured inputs; even the gear ratios are long, best for leaving the gutsy 'four' to mete out big doses of shove with a delightfully crisp response.

The Porsche just gets better, sharper and more energetic the harder you push it. You can see the appeal of the more powerful and lighter-weight models for those caught up in the pursuit of faster lap times; wieldy and easy to manipulate, the 944 can launch drivers from a pleasant Sunday jaunt to improving their lines around a race track without changing its tune. Inevitably, these more specialist models have their financial premiums: the 247bhp 944 turbo starts from around £20,000 and the ultimate, track-focused 968 Club Sport is an increasingly collectible investment of £30k or more. The 16-valve, 3-litre S2 has long been considered the Goldilocks variant, which saw out the 944 production run from 1989 to its 968 replacement in 1992, but there's something to be said about the older, eight-valve cars, whose smaller wheels and more pronounced bumpers are better matched with such older sports car company as we have today.

Either way, from as little as £5000 the 944 is not only all the sports car you could ever need (Porsche even did a few drop-tops), but it could even be your only car. It's quiet and refined enough to be comparable to a contemporary saloon, and its servicing demands are not much worse, either, thanks to a large community of keen owners, plentiful parts that eschew most of the 911's eye-watering prices, and the typically German layout of regular touchpoints that would encourage even the most reluctant DiY mechanic. It'll tip over 25mpg on a run, too.

Certainly passable as a daily driver, then, and even better for long road trips. While the rear plus-two seats are more for short journeys, the front buckets are supremely comfortable and the boot has space enough for weeks away. John and Freddie have taken this car to the south of France more than once, and recently returned from the Scottish Highlands, where the Porsche's comfortable, 6ft-friendly driving position, good ventilation, effective windscreen wipers and decent headlights added another layer of sports-car capability.

No wonder there are so many examples with hundreds of thousands of miles under their wheels. A sports car for all people and all seasons, ready for your favourite section of the commute as much as the occasional track day or epic run to the Alps. The only problem is that your mother may like it, too. **AM**

ALTERNATIVES

VOLKSWAGEN CORRADO The sporting coupé that VW actually did market, from 1988-'95, with four-cylinder and V6 power. Rarer than a 944 and bound to make more of an impact at car shows, but trickier to maintain thanks to some unique parts and quite pricey at £8-15,000.

MITSUBISHI STARION The 944's arch nemesis from Japan, with a similar silhouette and, from 1985, even more aggressively wide arches. Its turbo 'four' is strong enough to match the S2, especially the 1986-on intercooled models, and it's a cult classic with values to match.

BUYING TIPS

- The engine and 'box should be smooth, so beware if it feels rough or reluctant, and especially of whining in the gears
- Check for regular fluid changes, plus cam drive and balancer-shaft drive replacement at 48k miles or four years, and inlet chain at 96k on twin-cams
- Electrics can suffer from lack of use and water ingress through the sunroof, and some, such as the pop-up headlight motors, are expensive

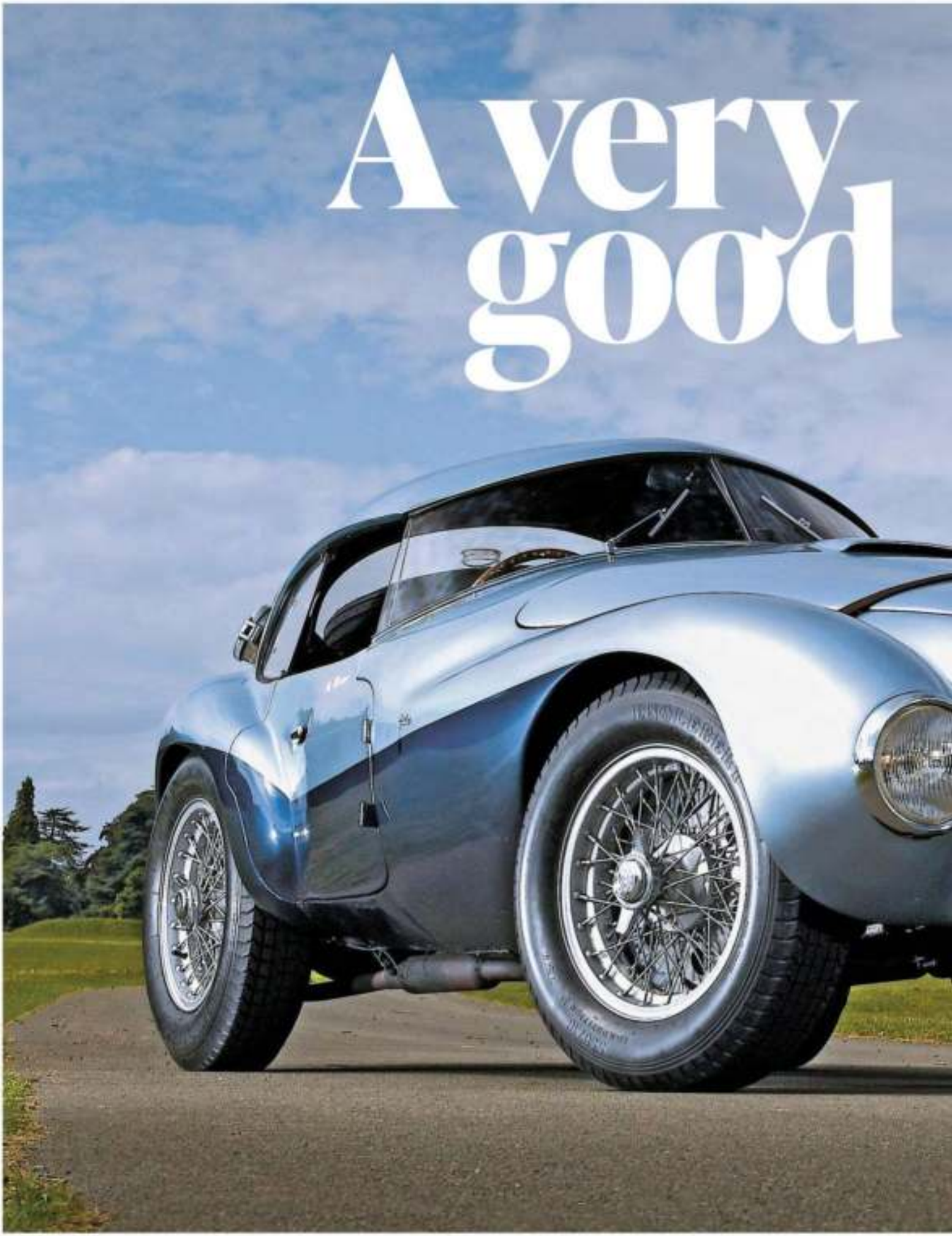
'Wieldy and easy to manipulate, the 944 just gets better, sharper and more energetic the harder you push it'

SCORECARD
Value for money **4/5**
Ease of maintenance **4/5**
Parts availability **4/5**
Practicality/usability **5/5**
Driver appeal **4/5**
Cars & Coffee factor **3/5**
TOTAL 24/30

FACTFILE
Sold/no built 1982-'92/163,820
Engine sohc 2479cc 'four', with digital ignition and Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection
Max power 163bhp @ 5800rpm
Max torque 151lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission five-speed manual or three-speed auto, RWD **Weight** 2815lb (1274kg) **Mpg** 25
0-60mph 8.2 secs **Top speed** 136mph
Price new £18,234 (1985)
Price now £5-10,000

Transaxle gearbox gives ideal weight distribution and superb balance. Below, from left: big 'four'; sober but stylish interior is well made

A very good



egg

This unique 1950s Ferrari was the brainchild of a brilliant amateur racing driver and has lost none of its impact over the years

WORDS **JAMES PAGE** PHOTOGRAPHY **JOHN BRADSHAW**

This is not the most subtle of entrances, driving a unique Ferrari through the grounds of Blenheim Palace. Its trio of Weber carburettors and heavy, unforgiving clutch are better suited to running at full song on the open road than manoeuvring at low speed, and blipping the throttle to keep the V12 alive results in even more smartphones being turned in our direction. Eventually we reach the sanctuary of Blenheim's picturesque South Lawn, turn off that glorious engine and step out to take one final look at this distinctive shape in the late-afternoon sunshine.

On the eve of the 2024 edition of Salon Privé, showstopping cars have been coming and going all day, but this particular Ferrari is unrivalled in its ability to turn heads. It was the brainchild of Italian racer Giannino Marzotto, who initially referred to it as the Jet Coupé. Over the years, however, it has become better known as the Uovo – the Italian word for egg…

Along with Vittorio, Umberto and Paolo, Giannino Marzotto was one of four wealthy brothers who raced for less than a decade in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and in a relatively small number of events, yet between them they achieved a remarkable amount of success. They were never full-time professionals and are often referred to as gentleman drivers, but that sells them short. The brothers were not only important early patrons of Enzo Ferrari and incredibly loyal to the marque, but also talented enough to occasionally race as part of the Maranello factory team.

Enzo himself once wrote that Giannino 'would have been an excellent professional driver and perhaps even a champion' – his short career was headlined by two victories in the Mille Miglia. When he took the first of those, in 1950, he was only 22 years old and drove in a double-breasted suit and tie. After his second win, three years later, no less a rival than Juan Manuel Fangio wrote: 'Marzotto passed me without trouble, showing that he was no amateur, but a front-rank driver.'

Giannino's early experiences of Ferraris had left him impressed with their V12 engines, but less enamoured with their handling and aerodynamics. He often tested cars on the roads around Maranello and reported his concerns to Enzo, who remained unmoved. A few years later, *Il Commendatore* would tell Belgian ace Paul Frère that "aerodynamics are for people who can't make proper engines".

At the end of 1950, Giannino decided to take matters into his own hands, and he came up with a plan to assemble a lightweight, aerodynamic coupé using a Ferrari chassis, engine and running gear. He discussed his ideas with his friend Paolo Fontana, who

Guido Mancini drove the Uovo in the '52 Mille Miglia, seen here at Brescia

GETTY

Surprisingly spacious cockpit features high scuttle. Right, from top: large spare; new dials from '80s rebuild; bodywork supported by delicate bracing

owned a coachbuilding company in Padova, and designer Franco Reggiani, and the three of them set about turning theory into reality.

Reggiani was a precocious design talent whose long career would eventually cover everything from aviation, boats and cars to sculpting works of art – and even developing machinery for the baking industry. While it is commonly reported that he designed the Uovo and Carrozzeria Fontana manufactured it, his family has stated that, in reality, he performed both jobs himself. According to the family's account, Fontana's contribution was simply to give Reggiani a corner of its Padova premises in which to work.

Giannino later wrote that his vision was for the car to feature 'very low bodywork where everything was rounded and tapered'. Supported by a delicate tubular frame, the panelwork was made out of Peraluman, an aluminium alloy that was very difficult to work with, but which was light and strong.

'What was now needed,' Giannino continued, 'was a steeply sloped windshield that offered the least amount of wind resistance. Reggiani had worked in the aeronautical industry during the war [and] provided in an exemplary way. With great surprise we discovered that [it] did not give rise to annoying reflections. Visibility was excellent.'

That final consideration was further enhanced by the fact that Reggiani did away with support pillars for the windscreen.

'It rises from a front air intake to a wraparound windscreen and a taut, muscular rear end'

Instead, the roof was 'tied' to the scuttle panel via thin steel cables located in each corner.

'The driver's seat itself was much more towards the rear axle than normal,' Giannino added. 'Enzo Ferrari told me that when the driver sits very close to the front wheels, driving is easier but dangerous, because the driver does not perceive the skidding of the vehicle when cornering. By placing the driver close to the rear wheels, he captures the movement of the tail... As a result, the car when cornering was very sensitive and particularly reactive to the use of power.'

Beneath that unique coachwork was the chassis of a 166MM – 024MB, which had been bought new in early 1950 by Umberto Marzotto – plus the 2562cc engine from a 212. Today, the whole package has lost none of its impact. From the front air intake resembling that of a jet engine, it rises to the wraparound windscreen and continues to a taut, muscular rear. It is striking whichever way you look at it, and much more compact and cohesive in the metal than it can appear in photographs – the design was way ahead of its time when compared with some of its contemporaries.

The car made its competition debut on the 1951 Giro di Sicilia, where it would be joined by an open Ferrari that had been planned in tandem with the Uovo and which would be driven by Vittorio Marzotto. Based on a 212, it featured an extremely basic, cycle-winged

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If its looks aren't enough, twin upswept tailpipes confirm the Uovo's arrival. Below: bonnet strap confirms racing past; tapering rear details

'Although it lacked the power of bigger-engined Mille Miglia rivals, its nimble handling more than made up for it'

body that had been hurriedly lashed together in a matter of a few days. Giannino recalled: 'The two cars took the starting signal surrounded by the dismay of the experts and the merry curiosity of the crowd.'

Once under way, however, he found the Uovo to be a 'marvellous' car, even on Sicily's narrow, winding roads: 'The non-stop race was long, approximately 1100km, and had more than 8000 sharp bends, [however] the particular distribution of weight on the coupé allowed me to go through the winding roads doing an imperceptible movement of the wheel and keeping most of the power on. The very good visibility gave me the chance to drive as in a Grand Prix, skimming along the guardrail and pavements.'

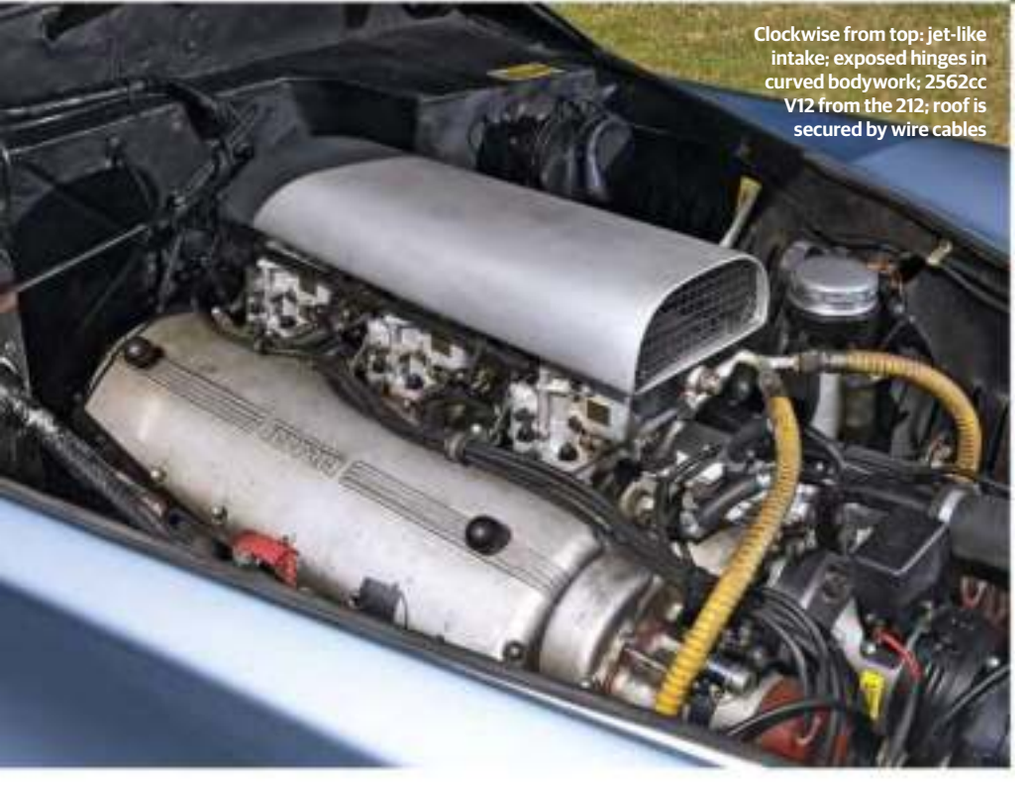
Giannino was leading as he approached the final stages, but the differential failed at Messina. He then got on a train to Palermo and arrived just in time to celebrate with Vittorio, who had taken an unlikely victory.

The following month, Giannino drove the Uovo in the Mille Miglia and, although it lacked the power of its bigger-engined rivals, its nimble handling more than made up for it, and he was feeling confident as the start approached. By the time he was heading down the Adriatic coast, he had built a lead of about 10 minutes despite the fact that he was driving well within himself; near Senigallia, however, he heard an ominous sound coming from the back of the car. He stopped and inspected one rear tyre while co-driver Marco Crosara checked the other. When they found nothing amiss, Giannino assumed that the differential was about to fail again. Not wanting to risk it locking up at high speed in the wet conditions, he made the decision to stop.

Having built up such a commanding lead, it was a bitter blow, especially when he later discovered that the cause of the noise was a tyre problem after all, which he and Crosara had simply failed to spot. It was particularly embarrassing considering that he'd already given Enzo Ferrari a hard time about what he thought was another blown differential.

The Uovo was clearly fast enough to battle for outright victory in major races, but it had failed to finish in both of its two outings. Better was to come the next time out, when Giannino entered the car for the Coppa della Toscana, which was based in Florence and featured a route of almost 700km. Despite the fact that

The Uovo's striking design championed aerodynamics as a performance aid at a time when Enzo Ferrari dismissed the idea as unnecessary



Clockwise from top: jet-like intake; exposed hinges in curved bodywork; 2562cc V12 from the 212; roof is secured by wire cables

he had a long day ahead, Giannino was up until 2am talking to journalist Giovanni Canestrini, who scolded the youngster for not taking the race seriously enough. That impression was further reinforced when Giannino showed up for the start without his driving gloves, having forgotten to bring them with him.

After only a short distance, he was suffering from blisters and the Uovo's cockpit was getting uncomfortably hot, but he pressed on and overtook the Ferrari 212 of Piero Scotti on the approach to Radicofani. He then caught Vittorio, who was having trouble with a slipping clutch in his 340 America, but at the Livorno refuelling stop he found that he'd once again dropped behind his brother. He refocused his efforts and drove at ten-tenths for the rest of the race, crossing the line in Florence to take victory in five hours and 14 minutes.

That would be the final occasion on which Giannino competed in the Uovo, yet it remained part of the Scuderia Marzotto stable and raced on through the 1952 season. Outings that year included a return to the Mille Miglia, driven by Guido Mancini. After a cautious start, he arrived in Ravenna in 29th place but was then

fastest of all on the challenging section across the mountains from L'Aquila to Rome. He was seventh overall by the time he was forced into retirement between Siena and Florence.

In late 1953 the Uovo was shipped to Mexico and sold – by then with a 166 engine – via Carlos Braniff to Ignacio Lozano Jnr, publisher of Los Angeles-based Spanish newspaper *La Opinión*. Lozano Jnr raced it at venues including Pebble Beach and Torrey Pines during 1954, and it was around this time that movie icon James Dean had his photograph taken with the car outside a workshop near the Burbank Studios.

Lozano Jnr later sold it to David Andrews, apparently minus its engine because Andrews had wanted to fit an American-built V8. The car subsequently passed to Ferrari enthusiast Harvey Schaub and then, in 1982, to Jack du Gan, by which time it was looking very sorry for itself. Du Gan set about fully restoring the Uovo, stripping it down to its bare chassis and thankfully adopting a sympathetic, 'refurbish rather than replace' approach to its delicate bodywork. Somewhere along the way – while it was owned by either Andrews or Schaub – the car had gained the 2562cc engine from a 212 Inter, which has remained with it ever since.

The work was completed in time for the 1986 1000 Miglia retrospective, and the Ferrari continued to be a crowd-pleasing addition to the event over the following few years. It was even reunited with Giannino, who was impressed with the engine and gearbox, but less enamoured with the steering and brakes, both of which he recalled being much more effective in period. He suggested that the tyres were too big, but conceded with good humour that old drivers "are also a little obsolete, and alas without the possibility of remedy".

> *'Movie icon James Dean had his photo taken with the car at a workshop near Burbank Studios'*

Giannino's final race had been the 1954 Mille Miglia. As with his brothers, he'd known that his future lay in the family business empire, which had started in 1836 with the opening of a wool mill in the small town of Valdagno in northern Italy. It then expanded greatly under the guidance of their father, Gaetano, who not only diversified beyond textiles into areas such as agriculture, but also built a 'social city' district in Valdagno that provided good-quality housing and schools, plus sporting and cultural facilities. That sense of social responsibility would be passed down through subsequent generations of this remarkable family.

The Uovo survives as a tribute to Giannino Marzotto's youthful vision, and it's impossible to sit in the spartan cockpit, looking over the high scuttle through that shallow windscreen, without picturing yourself following in his wheeltracks, howling through the Italian countryside. An extremely effective road-racer in its day, it evokes a period in which amateur drivers – in the very finest sense of that word – could enjoy success at the highest level.

Thanks to *Moritz Werner, Keith Bluemel, Barkaways (barkaways.com) and everyone at Salon Privé (salonpriveconcours.com). The Porter Press book Ferrari Uovo is available via porterpress.co.uk*

The TECHNOCRAT *and the* STATESMAN

Borgward had the measure of BMW with its P100 rival to the 502, but not for long. Drive them both today and you might wonder why

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JOHN BRADSHAW**

905 YUV

A variety of myths, rumours and conspiracy theories surround the circumstances that led to the premature demise of Borgward in 1961, but it has always been fairly clear to me that the Bremen-based firm provided the template for what BMW was to become in the '60s: a purveyor of sporty, high-quality middle-class saloons that trod a careful line between mass-market and specialist appeal.

That Carl Borgward had a natural instinct for what was required is best seen in the highly successful Isabella, a compact and lusty saloon which showed that practicality, performance and refinement were not incompatible qualities in a 1.5-litre family car that was both nicely finished and fun to drive. Mercedes-Benz produced nothing like it and BMW showed few signs of doing so.

The easily distracted Borgward tended to spread himself rather too thinly over too many products: he dabbled in helicopter manufacture, fuel injection and automatic transmissions, plus small cars under the Goliath/Hansa/Lloyd brands. The Bavarians, meanwhile, were floundering by building vehicles of insufficient variety: bubble cars and V8 luxury machines made strange bedfellows.

Enter Herbert Quandt, the financier who saved BMW and was astute enough to recognise that Borgward represented the greatest threat to the firm's future success. When quality problems with the ambitiously engineered Lloyd Arabella caused Borgward to seek some assistance from the Bremen state government to secure bank loans, it was rumoured that Quandt did everything in his power to hinder the rescue. In fact, negative articles in the German mainstream press about Borgward's financial behaviour probably did the job for him. The banks pulled the privately funded Borgward's line of credit in 1961.

Sales plummeted in this atmosphere of uncertainty, and the local government took control of Borgward that year. Carl resigned and died two years later, apparently of a broken spirit, just as the plant and machinery to build his cars was being shipped off to Mexico, where Borgwards would continue to be produced until 1970. To the end, this cigar-chomping, self-made tycoon insisted all his bills were paid and the company was solvent: as Germany's fifth-largest car manufacturer, Borgward was in a much healthier state than BMW before Quandt's involvement. While the Bremen factory was turned over to Mercedes truck production, many of the engineers who had been working on the next generation of Borgwards gravitated to Munich: it does not take much of a leap of the imagination to see how the *Neue Klasse* 1500 of 1961 could have started out as an Isabella replacement.

The short-lived P100, or 'Big Six', was more of a challenge to Mercedes than BMW. It was announced at Frankfurt in 1959 and must have stolen some thunder from the new *Heckflosse* 220SE; with the 220 in short supply at first, P100 sales were buoyant. Borgward also doubtless relished beating Mercedes into production with air springs. Air suspension, in place of coils or leaf springs, was optional at first then standardised in 1960, at the Geneva Salon, although it had proved to be a fleeting and not very reliable gimmick on Cadillacs and other American cars a couple of years previously. But the Borgward/Firestone system appears to have been at least as durable as the Bosch type used by Mercedes on its 300SE models.

This *grosser* Borgward used Bosch levelling valves and a pump driven off the crank pulley; the air 'bags' were of the rolling type made under Firestone patents. The big, five-seater P100, with its two-speed wipers, cigar lighter, and fog and reversing lights as standard, used the same ball-jointed front suspension as the Isabella and a six-cylinder 2240cc engine from the Pullman – actually a six-pot version of the Isabella unit that would take the P100 to 100mph and return 26mpg at 75mph.

The new BMW saloon was first shown as the six-cylinder 501 in 1951. The five-seater body, with rear-hinged back doors (outlawed in Germany in the early '60s) and cherubic looks, went under a variety of names depending on the engine and the level of trim. Between 1952 and '63, 21,807 were built, including handfuls of specialist coupé and cabriolet versions, mostly by Baur. On closer inspection, the multiplicity of names and variants attributed

The BMW's form is conservative rather than forward-thinking, but it is graceful, well crafted and handsomely proportioned

From top: all-alloy 90° V8 majors on smooth flexibility; rear-hinged back doors and well-trimmed bench seat

to the shape leaves an impression of deckchairs being rearranged on the *Titanic* as carburettors and compression ratios were juggled.

For instance, a 501 could be a 2- or 2.2-litre 'six', or use a lower-powered 95bhp eight-cylinder engine to become the 501 V8 (simply the BMW 2.6 from '58). Individually, the latter variant was the most prolific of these roomy cars following the demise of the 501/6 in 1958.

The 100bhp V8 was first called a 502 2.6, then a 2.6 Luxus and finally the 110bhp 2600L, with disc front brakes. The bored-out, oversquare 3.2-litre engine was launched as the 120bhp 502 Super in 1955, then renamed simply BMW 3.2 in 1958, by which time it was possible to buy a higher-compression, twin-Solex-equipped 140bhp 3.2 Super. In 1961 the 3.2 Super became the 3200L or the 160bhp/118mph 3200S, the quickest German production saloon of the early '60s: with twin Zenith carburettors, it was even 10bhp up on the exotic 507 sports car. The bigger rear window came in 1955, and the V8s could be identified by front foglights, bootlid badging and their more lavish interior fittings.

BMW was thinking in terms of an American-

Dashboard of 502 is dated even for its time; large wheel appears similar to 507's. Right, from top: V8 crest; neat 180kph speedo

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style, overhead-valve, wedge-head V8 as early as 1949. All alloy in construction (it was the first mass-produced engine with both aluminium block and heads), with wet liners and pushrod-operated valvegear, this was Germany's first post-war V8 – which in 'square' 2.6-litre/100bhp form would urge the big saloon to an honest ton, with a 70mph third gear.

Pinin Farina was consulted for the styling, but BMW went for an in-house design that seemed to take up where the pre-war 326 had left off, and the steel body was solidly welded to the chassis. Six-cylinder engines apart, these were all-new cars for 1952, based around a box-section, perimeter-frame chassis with tubular crossmembers, front suspension by wishbones and torsion bars, and a curious form of sector-and-pinion steering gear that turned a vertical shaft to control the steering arms. Another engineering oddity was the twin-propshaft drivetrain, which, by means of a shaft between the clutch and the transmission, meant the gearbox could be more freely located to give a clear, flat floor area. The live rear axle, also on torsion bars, was carefully located by means of an A-frame on the diff casing.

These big post-war BMW V8 saloons were expensive but beautifully finished, with features such as two-tone horns, a headlight flash on the steering boss and, on some models, an electric radio antenna that powered up when the set was switched on. Assisted steering and front discs were available early on in the production life of the 3.2/3200 – it was exotic stuff in the '50s, but hardly enough to justify a £2500 price in the Purchase Tax-loaded UK market. Perhaps hoping to recapture the hearts – and wallets – of the pre-war BMW loyalists, importer AFN brought over a smattering of cars (with right-hand drive and a floor change) but, like Max Hoffman in America, would have been happier selling 507s had the factory been able to build them in meaningful numbers.

This left-hand-drive 1960 2600 was brought into the UK in 1974 and discovered in a London lock-up by its current owner, Darren Sullivan, a Stockwell-based American who has lavished many hours and a not inconsiderable sum getting the car into its present condition, all in the face of general apathy and ignorance of the model. Darren has invested a lot of effort researching parts and found BMW's historic division to be fairly clueless: it couldn't even tell him the name or code of its blue paintwork.

Given that only 2500 P100s were built, the revival of this right-hand-drive car by Borgward Drivers' Club stalwart John Wallis has been

'Pinin Farina was consulted, but BMW went for an in-house design that seemed to take up where the 326 had left off'

BMW 2600L (502 V8)

Sold/number built 1954-'63/5914
Construction steel body, separate chassis
Engine all-alloy 2580cc V8, single Solex carburettor
Max power 100bhp @ 4800rpm
Max torque 130lb ft @ 2500rpm
Transmission four-speed manual, RWD
Suspension: front independent, by wishbones **rear** live axle; torsion bars, telescopic dampers f/r
Steering pinion and sector **Brakes** drums
Length 15ft 6¼in (4731mm)
Width 5ft 10in (1778mm)
Height 5ft (1524mm)
Wheelbase 9ft 3½in (2832mm)
Weight 3024lb (1372kg) **Mpg** 16-29
0-60mph 16.8 secs **Top speed** 101mph
Price new £2458 **Price now** £30,000

BORGWARD P100

Sold/number built 1959-'61/2530
Construction steel monocoque
Engine iron-block, alloy-head 2240cc straight-six, single Solex carburettor
Max power 100bhp @ 5100rpm
Max torque 116lb ft @ 2000rpm
Transmission four-speed manual, RWD
Suspension independent, at **front** by double wishbones **rear** swing axles; air springs, telescopic dampers f/r **Steering** roller and segment **Brakes** drums, with servo
Length 15ft 5½in (4712mm)
Width 5ft 8in (1727mm)
Height 4ft 8½in (1435mm)
Wheelbase 8ft 8½in (2650mm)
Weight 2862lb (1298kg) **Mpg** 16-26
0-60mph 14.6 secs **Top speed** 100mph
Price new £2395 **Price now** £25,000

Borgward (on right) is very supple and stable on its air springs. The BMW rides well, too, but it is less composed under heavy braking

relatively effortless in comparison. It is even possible to buy the Firestone rubber air springs new, and the engine is still tight from a rebuild. Amazingly, CSV 386 wears the same paintjob it had when I first encountered it in September 1994. Priced at £2395 in 1961, it is one of maybe 20 P100s brought in by concessionaire Metcalf & Mundy, and has recently been repatriated to the UK after decades in Germany.

Low built, with a generous glass area and dinky 13in wheels, the impressive but hardly pretty P100 is a substantial car with wide-opening doors, plenty of shoulder-, leg- and headroom, and a clean, unpretentious dash that must have been one of the first to adopt standardised European symbols for the functions of its chunky switches. The rotary control for the heat distribution is of comically large proportions; the boot is massive, too, and everything you can see and touch is nicely but practically finished in a way that was expected of even humble West German cars.

The engine is sweet, free and makes healthy straight-six sounds that put it a cut above everyman 'sixes' from Ford, Vauxhall and BMC. Its best power is delivered quite high in the rev range, but peak torque appears at a not unreasonable 2000rpm and it generally feels stronger than its modest dimensions suggest. Pulling an 18mph-per-1000rpm diff, the 85mph third gear must be a handy overtaking ratio, but we didn't go above about 60mph in deference to the freshly rebuilt engine.

Inside, you sit on broad, generous front seats holding an equally man-sized and somewhat vertically set steering wheel. Its circumference is a clue to the amount of effort required at low speeds, although the light clutch and fairly handy turning circle mean this Big Six is not ponderous to manoeuvre. The slightly notchy column change is not a highlight, but improves with familiarity; the stability and supple ride are excellent, if not quite in the Citroën DS class for opulent comfort, at least at low speeds. At a faster cruise I doubt there's much in it.

The air springs really reveal their advantage in corners, where they arrest body roll very well and by extension mask the worst excesses of the swing-axle rear suspension. The big Borgward understeers just enough to gain your trust, but it hangs on beautifully without throwing its occupants around by way of extravagant roll angles.

The BMW has a hamster-like visage but is graceful and balanced overall. The boot is not as small as its rounded-off shape suggests and features a possibly unique trapdoor in the lid to get at the fuel filler. Mounted out of harm's way behind the rear seat, the tank has both a cut-off and a reserve tap. There is a proud, thoroughbred look to the neatly finished engine bay, complete with fitted tool set, and everything is easy to get at. On entry, the doors shut behind you with a solid 'thunk' that is a shorthand for the whole feel of the car.

The dashboard, with its croissant-shaped speedometer, cream switchgear and metallic fascia, could be from a pre-war 326. The seats have Continental-style 'pullman' cloth covers offering a more commanding driving position than the P100 from behind the inevitable cream steering wheel. Like the Borgward's, it is of substantial dimensions but lighter and smoother in action, with good castor return. The clutch and brakes are also light and the gearchange feels somewhat niftier than that of the P100, despite the complex underfloor mechanism necessary with a column shift working a remotely positioned transmission, although it cannot be rushed.

An impressive resistance to body roll in corners marks out the P100, to the benefit of passenger comfort

In many other ways, too, the BMW is not a car to be hurried or handled aggressively. The low-compression V8 has a quiet, gentle idle and good throttle response. Its peak torque output of 130lb ft is halfway up the usable rev range, so the acceleration in the lower gears feels purposeful rather than truly assertive: it seems natural to loaf along in the flexibly low top gear, in which meaningful lugging power begins at 20mph or less. The BMW's ride is supple and of-a-piece, but it nods its nose maybe a little more than you would like under braking. It feels quite soft to handle at low speeds, but the steering resists load-up fairly well, so the 502 canters through roundabouts and country road curves on an even keel and at a brisk pace that belies its somewhat matronly outward appearance. Its steering is not excessively low-geared, and you are never conscious of shuffling the wheel.

These big BMWs exposed the Munich firm's anxiety to get back to business as usual in the post-war era. With no particular glory days to reflect on, Carl Borgward was, by contrast, able to approach the idea of a modern German luxury car with fresh eyes: his excellent P100 deserved a kinder fate. With its low beltline and unitary construction, it was a car that looked towards the 1960s at a time when the contemporary large BMW saloon was still locked into the thinking of the early '50s. If the Isabella was a template for the 2002, then it is not hard to visualise the P100 as something of an inspiration for the E3 BMWs, still seven years away from production.

From top: hints of Americana abound in the P100's styling; 2240cc 'six' likes to rev; notchy column gearchange

From top: chunky central armrest on rear bench seat; badge script is more extravagant than that of the sober BMW V8

MM-55-20

PIONEER SPIRIT

Joining Portugal's earliest road-rally revival in a Bugatti Type 40, as pre-war heroes drive 300km south to Lisbon in the Corrida dos Fundadores

WORDS **AARON McKAY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JOEL ARAÚJO**

It is a scene from a century ago: a stream of rumbling machines tackling a hill, commanding full throttle with ignitions set to advance. The age-old contest of power is played out by a gutsy Mercedes-Benz 370S Mannheim and Ford Model A, leaving chugging Model Ts in their wake. The thick blat of a single-cylinder Norton motorcycle adds to the drama, and 'our' Bugatti Type 40 is thrumming, revving, raring to follow. Only a modern MINI sidling along trying to get a photograph breaks the spell.

Following much of the original route of the 1902 Raid Figueira da Foz Lisboa, the Corrida dos Fundadores (Founders' Run) has since 2022 invited pre-war cars on this 300km tour from Figueira da Foz, midway along Portugal's west coast, to Lisbon in the far south. The original event was won by Giuseppe Bordino in a Fiat 12hp belonging to Infante Dom Afonso, the then King of Portugal's brother, and it accelerated both a national motorsport movement and the formation of the Automóvel Club de Portugal in 1903. As well as the similarly inspired event run by ACP Classics in late October, the Corrida now takes place across a leisurely two days, and the key challenges today are navigation, reliability and trying not to linger too long at coffee stops.

From top: beachfront test at Figueira da Foz; 1935 Lagonda LG45 cruises up a busy sliproad

The revival in 2022 was instigated by the Museu do Caramulo's Salvador and Tiago Patrício Gouveia, both descendants of João de Lacerda, a pioneer Portuguese car collector. Having founded an art museum with his brother Abel in the 1950s, João's four-wheeled passion found its own building in the mountain town of Caramulo, creating what is now one of the world's oldest car museums. "He was a real enthusiast," says Salvador. "He bought a Jaguar XK120 in 1950 and a Citroën 15CV the following year, but the collection grew from many veteran cars found almost as scrap." Since the museum's public opening in 1953, all of the cars have been kept in running order, and its location is the perfect launchpad for the Founders' Run. "We wanted to bring back the same spirit that had inspired the creation of the Automóvel Club de Portugal," says Tiago. "The motoring passion in Portugal continues today. This is another way for enthusiasts to enjoy these pioneering cars on the road."

The museum has brought along a number of its moving exhibits, including a Minerva 20hp Torpedo (acquired in March 1956), a Bugatti Type 35 (April 1956) and a 1937 Rudge 499cc motorcycle (donated in '92). It is also how I find myself at the wheel of a 1929 Bugatti Type 40 on 27 September, beside co-driver and local journalist Adelino Dinis. This remarkably original car joined the collection in 1991 and, while it sits somewhat in the shadows of the two Type 35s in this year's entry, it nonetheless reveals all that is great about Bugatti.

That ought not to be much of a surprise, because the T40 was a cunning amalgamation of Molsheim principles and parts crafted into a relatively affordable first step on the Bugatti ladder, following the much-loved compact Brescia models of 1910-'34. The chassis was a shortened version of the Type 38's, using the refined quirks of Ettore Bugatti's design by now familiar to marque enthusiasts: the solid front axle is located by semi-elliptic leaf springs that pass through its centre, just like the legendary GP cars; reversed quarter-elliptics suspend the live rear; and an impressive box of eccentric metallic tricks lies under the bonnet.

Laid out with all the neatness of an obsessive, the 12-valve, 1496cc monobloc four-cylinder sparkles with engineering ingenuity as much as it does motivation for 'our' Grand Sport's modest 900kg. Compacted within the squared-off engine covers are the oil pump, the vertical shaft that drives the camshaft and the tightly packed alloy pistons served by big valves machined into the cylinder walls. Below is an aluminium crankcase incorporating the sump, and featuring fins and novel air channels for cooling. Although detuned from its Type 37 origins, its 50bhp at a lively 4500rpm feels like plenty, even today. Perhaps especially today, since only the roaring straight-eight Type 35 racers are able to leave us behind; everything else in our vintage convoy is well within the junior Bugatti's envelope. Sneers of 'Ettore's Morris Cowley' are long since forgotten, and deservedly so. As we line up along the Figueira da Foz beachside promenade on the Friday evening, spectators only recognise the Bugatti horseshoe grille as something special.

'We follow in the wake of a Morgan Super Aero three-wheeler, its JAP engine thumping through the crisp morning air'

A quick test has been laid out to kick off the weekend, and this remarkable sports car soaks up more of my enthusiasm than expected. Stable, wieldy and powerful on the brakes, the weighty percussion of the Bugatti 'four' delights in its chance to be let loose. Only the snagging gearchange upsets the rhythm, but there's all of the weekend to fathom the unobligingly tight gear gate and multi-plate, semi-wet clutch.

Befitting its junior sports-tourer role, the Type 40 tolerates all but the coldest mornings and doziest owners. A flick of the ignition and a stab of the starter on the timber dash, then it bursts happily into life. It refuses the choke to the point of reopening the Solex itself – at least with the oversprung linkage on 'our' car – and there is none of the anxious observation of warming oil pressure required of the high-compression T35 engine. It immediately settles to a smooth idle, easily controlled via a hand-throttle to the right of the steering wheel.

The pre-war road train relaxes into a cruise along the roads towards the beaches of Leiria, a landscape where pine trees blend with sand dunes. We follow in the wake of a 1929 Morgan Super Aero three-wheeler, its JAP engine thumping through the crisp morning air at a pace kind to the Bugatti: it needs barely a

From main: Casino Estoril near journey's end; fuel stop; luggage space at the rear; simple cockpit

Type 40, Pur Sang T35 replica and the museum's own, genuine T35. Left: T40 details sparkle in the sun

Javier Martínez
1916 DIATTO 20HP

The Diatto is the oldest participant in this year's run, but this vast seven-seater 20hp Phaeton bodied by Spanish coachbuilder Francisco Capella offers an impressive turn of speed. "Stopping is the main concern – the transmission brake is almost non-existent," laughs Javier Martínez, who is joined by wife and fellow enthusiast Sonia. "It leaks a bit of oil, too, but it goes well enough and doesn't overheat." This very car placed second in the inaugural Vuelta a Cataluña, a 650km race in three stages across Spain, held from 1916 to 1920.

Something of an engineering marvel in the best Italian tradition, the 2.7-litre Diatto features advanced shaft drive for the water pump, and it was the larger of the Latin marque's post-WW1 range. The company had only 10 years earlier ventured beyond its railway works origins into building Clément-Bayard cars under licence. "I really like the mechanicals and the history of veteran cars, and I have several vehicles dating back to 1909," adds Javier. "Back home in Spain, we use our single-cylinder Le Zèbre in all types of rallies. A friend recommended the Founders' Run, and we have really enjoyed the people and quiet roads with little traffic. We will definitely return next year."

quarter throttle to hold 45mph at 2500rpm. A pack of Ford Model As is taking it just as easy when one of the T35s tears past in a raucous cloud of spent hydrocarbons. The deep buzz of its drainpipe exhausts seems to carry for miles.

We get our chance to dice with both of these dramatic Grand Prix racers at the Leiria on Wheels motoring festival, where a makeshift circuit around the town's stadium has been laid out. With revs close to 4500rpm, the five-bearing 'four' feels smooth and some way off its limit. Decisive use of throttle and gearlever results in some surprisingly easy changes; as the Type 40 slinks around this tight course, there emerges a certain pace best suited for all the controls: brisk, and not far off the T35s.

It's more of a challenge navigating the dual carriageways and complex junctions out of this busy regional centre, before the relief of a long, sweeping run south along the N8, where we're followed by an elegant 1938 Lancia Aprilia Viotti (see panel) and a couple of Norton 'bikes to the day's last stop at the Centro de Artes e Criatividade, a cultural centre in Torres Vedras.

Sunday begins with a spectacular hillclimb into the Tapada Nacional de Mafra, the leafy hunting grounds of King João V (1706-'50) and where the 1916 Diatto makes a valiant effort to keep pace with a 1930 DeSoto CK Roadster and the museum's 1923 Minerva 20hp Torpedo.

The Bugatti has been intermittently fouling a plug and running on three cylinders when cold, before eventually warming to the idea of all four, so it's a blessing to have a long downhill stretch on the overrun, ignition retarded. It's also a chance for the T40 to give a masterclass in pre-war braking: these four-wheel, cable-operated drums must have reassured even those accustomed to other period sports cars. It's a calm environment for Adelino to recount the horrors he encountered down this very hill in 2022, at the wheel of a 1902 Darracq.

A coffee break at the 18th-century Mafra National Palace sets the tone for an afternoon of scenic cruising, although sadly nothing is heard from the 92-bell carillons, recently restored to operation at this World Heritage Site. Another stop soon appears on the horizon: the fairytale Pena Palace in the historic town of Sintra, as we thread ourselves around the edge of Lisbon. The roads get busier, our group instinctively bunches together and we are happy when a Bentley 4½ Litre takes the lead to broad-shoulder its way through the traffic.

A cautious run along Lagoa Azul, the former Rally de Portugal stage, becomes a glorious coastal cruise beside beaches Guincho and Crismina. A final assembly at the Casino Estoril frames our vintage champions against the neat lawns and extravagant water features of this '30s landmark, and draws the greatest number of bystanders yet. From the most charming Art Deco details of the 1937 Wolseley 14/40's plush interior to the extraordinary motorsport history of Portugal's homegrown 1933 Felcom 'Question Mark' racer, the headline news is that so many of these motoring relics have made it.

As if cursed by this premature thought, when we hop in the Bugatti for the final mile to our official finish further along the coast, I forget to retard the ignition lever and – pop, pssh – the cylinders gasp for air. We limp to the bay, tired, reflective and a little bit relieved, but equally disappointed it's over, and tasting a hint of the achievement earned by those who completed the original run, 122 years ago.

Understated Type 40 packed in clever engineering. Right: museum techs tinker with the Bugatti's monobloc 'four'

Thanks to *Museu do Caramulo (museudocaramulo.pt); Corrida dos Fundadores (fundadores.pt)*

Luís Guilherme da Costa and Alexandre Rainha
1932 MERCEDES-BENZ 370S MANNHEIM SPORT CABRIOLET

"It comes into its own on a longer trip such as this," says Luís Guilherme of his rare 370S Mannheim Sport Cabriolet. "I've long been a Mercedes-Benz enthusiast, but almost always with 1950s, '60s and '70s cars."

From a collection that includes a Pagoda SL, the 370S is a 92-year-old exception. Despite a faulty connection to the dynamo that required regular tinkering across the weekend, Luís reports that he and his co-driver Alexandre Rainha are able simply to sit back and enjoy the ride. "Only add fuel and drive," he beams. "Generally, the car behaves very well, with its good brakes, lots of torque and smooth, three-speed gearbox with overdrive." As you'd expect, from a 3689cc straight-six that's good for 75mph.

"The Figueira da Foz-Lisbon rally experience has been a great surprise," he adds. "The atmosphere has been fantastic and I'm now thinking about more opportunities to drive this wonderful car."

Raúl Aranda
1938 LANCIA APRILIA VIOTTI

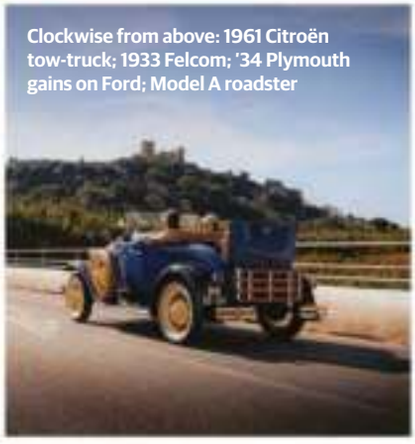
"When I found it, the Lancia was just in pieces and I wasn't even sure what it was," says Raúl Aranda, owner of this unique Aprilia Berlina Sport Aerodinamica.

"I spent a lot of time trying to discover its history, but it was the Viotti badge that provided the first clue because it fitted perfectly in the holes in the wing." From there, Raúl was able to restore the extraordinarily modern – and genuinely aerodynamic, with a drag coefficient of 0.34 – body to its former glory, as first seen at the 1937 Paris Salon.

"The restoration was only finished this year, and it's something very special even to see the car in the metal, never mind to drive it," smiles Raúl. "Lancias were just so far ahead of their time."

Among the upright pre-war selection on the Founders' Run, the Aprilia's flowing lines, penned by Count Mario Revelli di Beaumont and tested in the wind tunnel at the University of Turin, provide a remarkable contrast.

The elegantly imposing Mafra National Palace hosts combined refreshment/maintenance break



Clockwise from above: 1961 Citroën tow-truck; 1933 Felcom; '34 Plymouth gains on Ford; Model A roadster

Casino Estoril's lawns and fountains provide a fitting backdrop to the pre-war gathering towards the end of the Founders' Run

GOOD THINGS COME...

The beautiful and thrilling Iso Grifo has no trouble getting attention, but few would have the tenacity to spend nearly 40 years putting one right

WORDS **NIGEL BOOTHMAN** PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX EDLESTON**

LRA
999D

The Iso Grifo has a powerful effect on some people. The owner of this car, Peter Wolfers, only had to see a few photos in *Classic and Sportscar* to start searching for one. Blame Mike McCarthy, who drove the Grifo belonging to Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi for the May 1983 issue. More recently, the Grifo was described as 'one of the sexiest GT cars of the 1960s' in a *C&SC* rundown of Giorgetto Giugiaro's finest designs, and the model always pops up when motoring journalists are asked to pick an all-time favourite – as it did when new.

Take, for example, the usually objective John Bolster, writing in *Autosport* in 1967: 'I felt it was the best car I had ever driven. It was supremely beautiful, it had supreme roadholding and above all it had extremely high speed combined with aerodynamic stability. Yet the machine behaved perfectly in the heaviest traffic.'

He also mentions the 'almost complete suppression of exhaust noise', leading you to wonder what all those years of unsilenced Specials at Shelsley Walsh had done to his hearing. When Peter squirts the Grifo past our photographer along this quiet Essex lane, it isn't putting me in mind of the reading room at a monastery, it's transporting me to the paddock at the Le Mans Classic, watching a Bizzarrini 5300GT light its tyres and come thundering out to the assembly area. There's something about a tuned Chevrolet small-block V8 that's tricky to disguise, even with silencers intended for street use.

This one is a high-compression version with a promised 350bhp. That's impressive enough even if it's only a net figure at the flywheel, as was the custom in the United States at the time. The sound it creates is such a contrast with the car's svelte, sensuous looks. It's a fabulous design: shapely and lifted by jewel-like details, but with a muscularity that hints at what's hidden. If it were British, it would sound quieter, more subdued, probably a straight-six; if it were entirely Italian, there would be a busy, musical V12 or a multi-cam V8 – but, of course, Iso always used American engines.

Chevrolet Corvette motors were a long way from Renzo Rivolta's daily stock-in-trade in the 1950s. His company had done very well manufacturing household refrigerators and heaters, then it branched out to build scooters and small motorcycles, which provided an engine for an innovative bubble car in 1953. This, the Isetta, earned Rivolta a handsome income when BMW licensed the design and, by the end of the 1950s, he was yearning to make a much larger, faster car. Rivolta found ideal assistance in the form of Giotto Bizzarrini, whose sacking by Enzo Ferrari for his part in the 'palace revolt' of October 1961 proved very timely. Bizzarrini specified the chassis and suspension layout that would serve all of Iso's road cars, with some adaptations, until the end of their run in 1974.

The first Iso Rivolta IR 300 arrived in 1962 with a 327cu in (5.4-litre) Corvette-sourced engine, a handsome three-box shape and four seats. The Grifo A3L entered production in 1965, and the company's kudos soared with that superb fastback body, a shorter wheelbase, lower stance and more performance. This time Iso was not aiming at the Lancia/Jaguar niche, as the IR 300 had. In the UK, in June 1966 and after 20% Purchase Tax, a Grifo cost £5950, which was some £300 more than the Maserati

Superb interior was ultimately worth the three-and-a-half-year wait for the trimmer to complete the work

Clockwise from right: evocative name; badge was specially commissioned; svelte but muscular lines. Far left: confident handling

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Mistral, £1000 more than an Aston Martin DB6 and only £23 less than a Ferrari 275GTB.

A bold proposition, then, to say the least. Lift the bonnet of those three rivals and you were greeted by thoroughbred engines with upstairs camshafts and multiple carburettors, not a pushrod V8 that was only a few tweaks away from powering a pick-up truck. Others tried the formula and failed: the almost equally gorgeous Gordon-Keeble died from a terminal gap in the company's cashflow in 1966, despite offering an identical recipe of Giugiaro styling and a Corvette V8 for £2000 less than the Grifo. Yet the Iso's European sales reach, plus the wonderful styling, did just enough to keep the numbers ticking along. The average production for the small-block Grifo works out at about one a week over what would be a nine-year run.

"Negri quoted an amount in lire with so many zeros I didn't pursue it, but they were very helpful over the following years"

Of that total of 414 examples manufactured across two series, only 31 were built in right-hand drive, one of which is the car you see here. It was signed off by the works on 10 June 1966 and landed on UK shores five days later. From there the history is lacking. Peter believes that the car was upgraded to a factory 350bhp specification some time in 1967, and he would love to hear from anyone with memories of this Grifo before it passed to Watford-based Concorde pilot Bill Dick, more than a decade later. Peter found the car in 1986.

"Looking back, I was a bit too fussy about specification, but I was young and headstrong," he says. "I test drove a lovely 300bhp example with a two-speed Powerglide automatic 'box, but I wanted a 350bhp car, ideally a five-speed manual, and this one ticked the boxes."

That was about all it did. Dick had taken the engine and gearbox out to replace the clutch, and in doing so he discovered some structural corrosion. An attempted theft meant the side windows had been smashed, the steering lock broken and the fuel filler damaged. The price? Just £5000, which sounds tempting until Peter points out that the going rate for a good one in 1986 was £8-9000. But, with Peter and his wife-to-be having bought a derelict schoolhouse that needed lots of work, it had to be this one.

By the mid-1990s, Peter had amassed the funds to invoke the skills of Chris Lawrence of Wymondham Engineering, renowned creator and repairer of exotic bodywork. Lawrence quoted a worst-case sum of £10,500 to fix the extensive rust, but when the task was complete the bill had soared to £30,000. Today, Peter is philosophical about this, and he recognises the high standard of the work and the near impossibility of buying body panels, even through Italian Iso specialist Negri.

"Realistically, it was well spent," he says. "Any rust was cut out and fixed – new boot floor, box sections under the wings, inner wheelarches and the whole of the front of the car. Both front wings and the nose were created by Chris on his English wheel. I went to Negri to see what they could supply, and they quoted an amount in lire with so many zeros I didn't pursue it... But they became good friends and were very helpful over the following years."

Those would be long years: the huge bill not only crippled Peter's savings, but also cooled his enthusiasm for the project. He had been assembling parts – items as large as aluminium cylinder heads came back in his hand luggage during frequent work trips to California for his employer, Lockheed – but it took many years to recover the willpower to push things onward.

Below: towing Grifo home – with an Uno! – in 1986; all smiles at first, but the Iso needed more attention than originally anticipated

ISO GRIFO GL

Sold/number built 1965-'74/413 (all variants)
Construction steel body, steel chassis
Engine iron-block, alloy-heads, ohv 5354cc V8, Holley four-barrel carburettor
Max power 350bhp @ 5000rpm
Max torque 360lb ft @ 4000rpm
Transmission five-speed ZF manual, RWD via limited-slip differential
Suspension: front independent, by double wishbones **rear** de Dion axle, trailing links, Watt linkage; coils, telescopic dampers f/r
Steering worm and nut
Brakes discs, with servo
Length 14ft 6in (4430mm)
Width 5ft 10in (1770mm)
Height 4ft 3in (1200mm)
Wheelbase 8ft 2in (2489mm)
Weight 3197lb (1450kg) **Mpg** 14
0-60mph 6.2 secs **Top speed** 160mph
Price new £5950 (1966)
Price now £350-500,000

Giugiaro-styled Grifo was pitched boldly against far better-established and more upmarket rivals, but carved its own niche

From top: only two seats, but decent boot space; side grilles went AWOL after paintshop debacle; fine finish

"I realised in 2012 that if I didn't get on with it, I might never drive the car," he recalls. "I began doing the bits I could and eventually, in 2017, I handed the engine over to Mass Racing in Cambridgeshire for a rebuild."

Bar the lighter aluminium heads and minor changes to guarantee good behaviour on modern petrol, this refreshed the engine to standard 350bhp specification. The worn-out Holley four-barrel carburettor was replaced by a new one, the points were swapped for Hall-effect ignition and the old choke mechanism with a flap projecting into the exhaust was discarded. Getting the bodyshell painted proved to be a somewhat more fractured process: the first specialist Peter chose suffered some personal problems in the middle of the job and had his workshop repossessed by the landlord, which meant four weekends' work for Peter as he hunted down bits of the Iso.

"Everything was there for a trial fit, but luckily I'd photographed every piece I took to him, and I found all but five of the parts," he recalls. "The fins for the grilles on the flanks are individually shaped to fit the apertures, and they turned up in a box of dishwasher tablets."

Peter found a specialist near Cambridge to finish the paint and underseal the body, giving better protection than it had ever enjoyed when new. With the work finally done, he began rebuilding the suspension and electrics, while the interior went to a trimmer in Leeds who produced a beautiful job – eventually.

"Five months turned into three and a half years," says Peter, ruefully. "But I had waited a long time to get the car right, and that's life. Meanwhile, I stripped every single mechanical and electrical item on the Grifo. I dismantled all the switches and cleaned the contacts, restored them, reassembled them. Same thing with the motors, window winders, door catches and so on. I went back to first principles for the torsion bars that lift the bonnet, did the calculations and had them made. Most Grifo bonnets either fly up too rapidly or won't rise at all – this one rises smoothly."

This attention to detail soon grew legs, in a manner of speaking. Peter copied the stitching pattern for the underbonnet insulation blanket using ironing-board-cover material and scrim foam, attaching it with a high-temperature contact adhesive, and now he makes them for other Grifo owners. Something similar happened with the badges: Peter's son works for The Cambridge Building Society and found out who made the enamel badges worn by the counter staff. This turned out to be a firm in Birmingham, which was able to reproduce the 'Iso MILANO' badges, 76 pairs of which now adorn other Iso models all around the world.

What with making a new wiring loom, waiting aeons for dashboard instruments to be refurbished and reconstructing the car from its stripped-down state, the Grifo wasn't back on the road until 2023. The following year it made a tentative entry on to the show circuit and immediately picked up prizes, including the *Classic & Sports Car* Editor's Award at the London Concours in the summer. Peter never expected to rival the big-name professional restorers, and perhaps a nit-picker could detect minor differences, but, as we know, a Grifo exerts a strange power over observers.

As it does in the cabin. It's so pretty in here that I wonder if actually starting and driving this car is where it's all going to go wrong. What could live up to such promise?

Astonishingly, the driving experience is no let-down after the looks, and neither is there any sense you're missing out by not having an exotic, highly strung V12. A bit of throttle helps the V8 burst into life, and it feels like any 350bhp small-block must do: a little grumpy, but with the certain knowledge that you have a choice either to exercise great caution, or unleash a tiger. The stubby gearlever reveals a pleasingly precise gate, the clutch is weighty but not impossible and there's a little judder

From top: DiY bonnet insulation resulted in a small-scale business opportunity; rebuilt 350bhp Chevy V8

'It has plenty of torque and is dramatically fast, with a battering soundtrack that's pure Le Mans or Goodwood'

on take-up, unless you're bold and don't mind a neck-whipping launch. It has plenty of torque everywhere and, when given its head, is dramatically fast. Extend the revs in second and third gears and you're well past 100mph, with a battering, blaring soundtrack that's pure Le Mans Classic or Goodwood from inside the cabin, as much as it is outside.

Powerful 1960s machines from low-volume manufacturers can be alarming to drive, so you have to credit Iso and, of course, Bizzarrini for knowing their business. The de Dion rear suspension, aided by the low ride height, is well planted and builds confidence as speeds increase. It's far happier sweeping through long bends at 60, 70mph and more than it is negotiating tight corners at half those speeds. The brakes are good enough for you not to make allowances for them and it rides pretty well, better in this regard – and in handling – than another key rival, the Jensen Interceptor. And, if you're planning an impromptu weekend away in St Moritz, the Grifo might not claim any plus-two rear seats, but it at least rivals the Interceptor for boot space.

It's a sporty, satisfying, capable, practical, beautiful, blisteringly fast mile-muncher. When you put it like that, there's no mystery at all about the Grifo's effect on people.

From above: Grifo is stable at speed and happiest in fast, sweeping bends; low ride height accentuates long-nosed profile

Diet poke

Stripped-out late-'90s roadsters didn't come any more extreme than the Lotus 340R, but in concept, if not execution, the Renault Sport Spider ran it close

WORDS **SIMON HUCKNALL** PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX EDLESTON**

It's doubtful we will ever see the likes of the Lotus 340R and Renault Sport Spider again – at least, not from their modern-day parent companies. Each was a courageous step into the unknown, led by a desire to create a pure and unadulterated driving experience unfettered by fripperies such as roofs, heaters and sound-deadening. While four years separated their debuts, they remain two of a kind, which is why they bear comparison today. But why and how they were conceived reveals two very different tales.

Few sports cars have created quite such a groundswell of positivity as the original Lotus Elise. At its launch in 1996 it wowed with its extruded-aluminium chassis, rigidity, low weight and sub-£20k price. But it was powered by a relatively humble four-cylinder Rover K-series engine with a mere 118bhp, so there was scope to further exploit its chassis by turning up the wick. Sport 135 and 160 road models followed, but by 1998 something far more extreme was in the pipeline. A sort of super-Elise – a derivative shorn of any vestige of practicality to starve it of yet more kilos, with its engine ramped up to 11.

Lotus managing director Chris Knight was also keen to have insight from outside the company about what such a leftfield creation should look like and how it should perform, and, in an unprecedented move, that led him to this magazine's sister title, *Autocar*.

"The 340R came about because, having been big supporters of the Lotus Elise since its launch, the magazine was asked to take part in the creation of a more extreme version," remembers Steve Cropley, *Autocar*'s editor in chief. "We worked with the Hethel design staff, choosing between radical proposals and aiming to help create something that was even lighter than the original and thus faster."

When *Autocar* first visited Hethel in October 1998, the Lotus design team, led by Russell Carr, was working with a full-sized clay body on a production Elise chassis. The magazine's original proposal had been for a 500kg target kerbweight. As Steve recalls: "We even came up with the name – '340' for the power-to-weight ratio, followed by 'R' in honour of the

Sport Spider was inspired in part by Renault's success in F1; 340R was developed with input from *Autocar* journalists

From top: high side rails and twin roll-over hoops in Lotus; breathed-on K-series engine makes 190bhp here

From top: UK Sport Spiders came with a full windscreen and quarter panels; 16-valve 2-litre 'four' makes 150bhp

Elan 26R." But the need to meet Type Approval regulations raised the target weight to nearer 600-650kg (it finally hit 675kg in production guise), and the '340' label was repurposed to mark the number of cars Lotus would build.

Given how pared down the 340R's skeletal body was compared to the regular Elise, it was surprising that only 50kg had been saved. The new car's composite body had no roof or doors, meaning a high step over the tub to enter the cabin. There was even debate between the journalists and Lotus designers about the latter's plans not to include a windscreen. But having had a poor experience with the original European-market Renault Sport Spider, which had nothing more than an 'aeroscreen', *Autocar*'s wish for one held sway. Elsewhere, clever solutions to bodywork reduction abounded. Homologation rules banned open-wheeled road cars, so the smallest clip-on mudguards allowed by law were used. Formula One-style winglets on either side of the nose cone, a broad bib spoiler and an acutely angled rear wing created real downforce at speed. The end result looked barely road-legal and, as *Autocar* would quip later in its first review, the 340R was like 'an Elise in a bikini rather than a one-piece swimsuit'.

Underpinning the 340R was the Elise's super-rigid extruded-aluminium chassis, but using the track-only Sport 190 model's set-up, with lower and stiffer springs, and uprated dampers. Yokohama was approached to produce a bespoke version of its sticky A032 tyre for the car, to be known as the A038 LTS, and the 340R wore 195/50s on 15in Tecnomagnesio wheels at the front and 225/45s on 16s at the rear.

Alas, the 190bhp Sport model's engine – the highest-output K-series unit available – wasn't type-approved (although it does power 'our' test car, of which more later), so the 177bhp engine was used. It produced maximum power at an unruly 7800rpm, which, combined with the 340R's higher-than-planned kerbweight, resulted in a power-to-weight ratio of 262bhp per tonne. Drive went to the rear via the Sport 190's uprated, close-ratio five-speed gearbox.

When the 340R was unveiled at the British Motor Show in October 1998, it hadn't yet been signed off for production, but the overwhelmingly positive response it received sealed the deal. Just over a year later, in December 1999, *Autocar*'s Chris Harris was first to drive it, declaring: 'Few cars at any price provide similar sorts of thrills.' By then, before production started two months later, all 340 340Rs had been sold, each costing £35,000.

You could proffer that such high demand for a limited-run Lotus was quite predictable. But if something similar were to emerge from a mainstream car maker? Surely not... Yet, in 1993, Renault's senior vice president for quality and corporate design, Patrick le Quément, argued otherwise. With Renault then riding a wave of F1 success, le Quément collaborated with Renault Sport's Christian Contzen about creating a low-volume sports car that could form the basis of a one-make race series and be homologated for road use. The pair agreed it should be a modern-day interpretation of the Caterham Super Seven (giving both of our test cars a Colin Chapman link), and within nine months le Quément had styled a dramatic, quite un-Renault-like design for a two-seater, mid-engined roadster. A full-sized model was created, from which Nogaro Technologies took a mould and started to develop a platform, working with Hydro Aluminium in Norway, soon to be the supplier of the new Lotus Elise's extruded-aluminium chassis.

As with the 340R, the speed at which the Sport Spider project progressed was startling. Series production was approved by October the following year, and a prototype appeared at Geneva in March 1995. Renault's concept of a car that would keep occupants 'in touch with the elements and ensure a level of participation through feel and vision more generally associated with motorcycle riding' was borne out in the design: the low and curvaceous Sport

Both cars are fully open and expose their occupants to the elements, but the Lotus better capitalises on the seat-of-the-pants feel

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RENAULT SPORT SPIDER

Sold/number built 1996-'99/1640 (plus 80 Trophy racing cars)
Construction composite glassfibre body, welded extruded-aluminium chassis
Engine iron-block, alloy-head, dohc 1998cc 'four', mapped ignition, multi-point fuel injection
Max power 150bhp @ 6000rpm
Max torque 140lb ft @ 4500rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, RWD
Suspension independent, by double unequal-length wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar f/r
Steering rack and pinion
Brakes ventilated discs
Length 12ft 5in (3795mm)
Width 5ft 10in (1780mm)
Height 4ft 1in (1250mm)
Wheelbase 7ft 8in (2343mm)
Weight 2050lb (930kg) **Mpg** 26.5
0-60mph 6.9 secs **Top speed** 134mph
Price new £25,950 (1997)
Price now £30-40,000

LOTUS 340R

Sold/number built 2000/340
Construction composite glassfibre body, bonded extruded-aluminium chassis
Engine all-alloy, dohc 1796cc 'four', Lotus engine management, electronic fuel injection
Max power 177bhp @ 7800rpm
Max torque 126lb ft @ 5000rpm
Transmission five-speed manual, RWD
Suspension independent, by double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers f/r; front anti-roll bar
Steering rack and pinion
Brakes ventilated, cross-drilled discs
Length 11ft 10in (3620mm)
Width 5ft 7in (1702mm)
Height 3ft 8in (1123mm)
Wheelbase 7ft 6in (2300mm)
Weight 1488lb (675kg) **Mpg** 25.8
0-60mph 4.5 secs **Top speed** 130mph
Price new £35,000
Price now £45-55,000

Spider truly played the track-car card with bravado. Stealing a march on the yet-to-be-launched Lotus Elise, its composite glassfibre bodywork was underpinned by a welded aluminium spaceframe and front subframe, with 3mm aluminium extrusions providing exceptional torsional stiffness. Unlike the 340R, though, the body had two doors, which opened skyward, and there was a 'frunk' above the front axle, also absent from the Lotus. The Sport Spider, though, was only supplied with an aeroscreen (at least for most markets) – a curved wind deflector running across the car's scuttle. For the UK, cars were fitted with a proper windscreen and glazed quarter panels to reduce buffeting. There was an umbrella-style temporary roof, while Sport Spiders were also equipped with a tonneau cover for use when parked.

'While more practical than the Lotus, the Sport Spider is also longer, wider and a whopping 255kg heavier, at 930kg'

Renault raided its (or rather, Alpine's) parts bin for suspension componentry, with most items common to the A610. Rose-jointed, double unequal-length wishbones were employed at both ends. The dampers acted directly on the upper wishbones via rocker arms, and at the rear they were arranged almost horizontally across the upper chassis. Ventilated brake discs were also pinched from the Alpine, and the Sport Spider rode on 16in 205/50 Michelin Pilot SXs front and rear.

All of which led to a car that, while more practical than the Lotus, was also longer by 175mm and wider by almost 500mm. This translated into a whopping 255kg-greater kerbweight of 930kg and, today, a noticeable difference in performance between the pair. Renault installed the 1998cc 16-valve 'four' that had previously seen service in the Clio Williams, but which at the time powered the Mégane Coupé 16v. With 150bhp peak power at 6000rpm, the Spider's 0-62mph time of 6.9 secs stays well behind the 340R's 4.5 secs, but it nudges ahead on top speed (134mph versus 130mph). For both cars, the latter figures are more governed by aerodynamics.

Approach Greg Birchall's Renault from the front or rear and you're struck by its width: it gives the impression of a four-square and ultra-chuckable little car. Available in red, blue or yellow when new, with the lower section always painted grey, the Sport Spider's overall finish is appealing and enhances its appearance compared with the default grey/black of the Lotus. Lift the rear clam and the transversely mounted engine sits relatively high in the chassis, with its four-branch exhaust manifold and those horizontally arranged dampers atop the chassis giving it motorsport credibility.

Lift the driver's door (there's no external handle, so you simply reach inside) and it rises with a nicely damped action, slowing to the end of its travel to avoid jarring against its stop. Access is quite easy, despite having to step over the high sill that forms part of the chassis. A deeply bucketed seat grips you, its facings trimmed in a waterproof, PVC-coated fabric; a neat aluminium pod behind the simple, three-spoke steering wheel holds dials for water temperature, oil pressure and revs, with a digital speedometer housed in a separate screen above the sweeping centre

Squint at the Lotus and it looks like an open-wheeled, single-seater racer; the Renault appears marginally more civilised

Sport Spider's seat and pedals are adjustable, so it's easy to get comfortable, but there is some pedal offset

console. Other than basic controls, there is little else to look at, save the cross-bracing of the naked aluminium chassis.

What Robert Johnson's Lotus lacks in terms of a bright colour palette, it makes up for in the sheer pared-back drama of its Minimalist bodywork. You hardly see the black wheelarches from a distance, which almost kids you into thinking it's an open-wheeled racer. With rain threatening (a permanent preoccupation for both owners), we avoid unscrewing the eight allen-key fixings for the rear engine cover to view the K-series at first, but almost every other component is laid bare: suspension wishbones and Koni dampers; the double-arch Safety Devices rollcage, into which the world's tiniest rear 'screen is integrated (a type-approval must-have, apparently); the tail-lights supported on exquisite alloy arms for lack of bodywork; and the twin tailpipes from the Janspeed exhaust either side of their fully exposed silencer box.

Take a big step over the 340R's bodywork and try to land feet-first on the aluminium floor ahead of the driver's fabric-trimmed bucket seat. Instrumentation is even more basic than the Renault's, with two shrouded Stack dials for revs and speed, the latter incorporating a digital readout for supplementary information. Buttons for lights are mounted on an upright aluminium strut in front of the gearlever and, like in the Renault, you feel truly ensconced within the chassis of the car.

We're driving the Sport Spider first. No aural fireworks on start-up, just the flat drone of its 2-litre 'four'. The main controls are light, with the gearlever moving through a very narrow gate, but the steering is heavy during parking manoeuvres. At low speeds, the rose-jointed suspension rattles away as if in a racing car, but it is actually quite compliant. Pick up the pace and the Sport Spider feels instantly planted. The steering retains a fair bit of heft and feels more alert off-centre than its two and a half turns from lock to lock suggest. It's not the most talkative of systems, but it compensates for that in its overall stability and surefootedness. The engine is hardly musical, either, and starts to sound quite gruff when you extend it above 4000rpm. But its flatter torque curve provides more flexibility along twisty B-roads than the Lotus. Grip – in the dry – is tenacious at the front and nicely adjustable via the throttle at the rear, allowing you to trim your cornering

Above, from left: easy gearshift has narrow gate; 16in alloys, Alpine A610 brakes; simple tail-lights; Renault is benignly throttle-adjustable. Main: it's flexible and brisk rather than outright fast

Rapacious 340R is very quick on a B-road. Below, from left: minimal bodywork; tail-lights fixed to aluminium extrusions; simple controls; Yokohama A038R tyres

line without any rear-biased nastiness. The unservoed brakes require a lot of effort from higher speeds and lack any depth of feel, even when worked hard. So it's with some relief that, while it is certainly rapid, the Renault never feels *that* fast – at least not as quick as its design and engineering would have you believe.

Not so the Lotus. Press the central starter button and the K-series fizzes away behind you, sounding as unremarkable as it does in a cooking Elise. You're forced to semi-recline in the fixed-back driver's seat, but it's easy to find an ideal position behind the 340R's small, leather-rimmed three-spoke steering wheel. No pedal offset here, but the narrow footwell lacks a rest for your left shoe. Any niggles, though, are swept aside the second you find a national speed limit sign and a ribbon of quiet, well-sighted, sinuous B-road: the 340R is untouchable, and not just in terms of outright velocity. Its steering is light at all speeds, but packed full of information, and after a few miles you relax your grip and revel in how little effort is needed to drive at speeds that would have you breaking sweat in the Renault. The car also feels far lighter than a standard Elise, relative to its modest weight loss. Every response seems delicate and finely judged, particularly the springing and damping, which allow the chassis to breathe even over ravaged surfaces. Grip is unimpeachable, too.

Driver-focused, truly spartan Lotus cabin has nothing that isn't needed; exposed chassis enhances the drama

But this 340R is extra special. Like many, Robert's car has been subjected to the 190bhp conversion that was made available post-production using Lotus-approved accessories. These tweaks included: remapped engine management; a revised inlet cam pulley for improved output and mid-range torque; removal of the resonator valve and secondary air filter; and a catalyst-replacement pipe. Consequently, performance is ballistic, and the K-series' slightly anodyne soundtrack is replaced by something more brutal and deep-throated. It still retains a good slug of low-rev torque, but its pace once above 4000rpm is in the high-performance Caterham league.

There's no denying that the 340R is the better car here in almost every respect. Its dynamics alone make it one of the very best point-to-point cars you will ever drive, if not the best. But the fact that a huge conglomerate such as Renault could bring a similarly conceived car to market beforehand, and come relatively close to achieving what Lotus did, deserves just as much admiration.

The flying brick

The Volvo 242 GT is a rare and understated performance saloon that never quite got the recognition it deserved. This extremely tidy example aims to redress the balance

WORDS **MARTIN PORT** PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX EDLESTON**

Expectation is a dangerous thing, but sometimes it's the aftertaste of an experience rather than at the point of consumption that leaves the most memorable impression. Take this particular four-wheeled main course, for instance. When I first saw this Volvo 242 GT in the metal and listened to its owner, Finn Shoolheifer, waxing lyrical about its semi-unicorn status and listing the various upgrades on this car over its standard, cardigan-wearing older sibling, I was expecting great things.

Some months later, and faced with an open airfield on which to play with it, I shuffle behind the steering wheel and prepare myself for the onslaught… Except that instead, I find myself gently reminiscing about the 1978 Volvo 240 DL estate that served as our family transport when I was approaching my teenage years back in the mid-'80s.

As I hustle Finn's saloon back and forth at ever-increasing speeds, my mind is still firmly stuck in a childhood spent picking bits off the spongy headrest mouldings and revelling in the unique aroma generated by warm oil, rugged plastic dashboard fittings and deep-pile carpets, while my dad plays the latest ELO release on the built-in sound system.

I quickly come to the conclusion that the car needs a chest-beating exhaust note in order to drag me from my past life and force me to appreciate what is quite so special about this particular Swedish offering – but that is where I get it all very wrong…

The 242 GT was the latest offering from Volvo to don its trainers and be considered to have some sporting credentials. The Amazon 122S, the 142GT and the pretty P1800 had all boasted particular features and specification highlights that gave a nod in a different direction, but right from the off the 242 GT was marketed with an alternative audience in mind.

Launched in 1974, the 240 range was initially made up of six models that included the 242, 244 and 245 rungs on the Swedish automotive ladder, offered in Luxe, De Luxe and Grand Luxe variants. It wasn't until 1977, however, that the GT tag was added in a bid to win over those with half an eye on 0-60mph times rather than load-space or crash-test figures.

The initial incarnation of the 242 GT was built in Gothenburg's Torslanda plant and powered by a 2.1-litre B21 engine, and the first models made their way to new owners in 1978. The B21 would later be replaced by the B23E unit with Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection – a move that resulted in the now 2.3-litre, four-cylinder engine pumping out a respectable 140bhp and which, arguably, finally helped the model go some way towards matching the advertising hype. With the Saab 900 Turbo being its main homegrown competitor and already drawing parallels with

Clockwise from top left: busy dials, with needles resting at 11 o'clock; Finn Shoolheifer with rare find; familiarly angular cabin; period stereo; stripes on seats and doors match exterior; solid centre console

Bolstered seats do their job well when pressing on. All-black interior is lifted by limited flashes of orange

the aircraft industry in its marketing, it's hardly surprising that Volvo also opted to include images of high-powered jets in the 242 GT's publicity material, claiming: 'If it had wings it'd fly.' It was a bold headline, even with the recent power upgrades, but one that helped to position the model's appeal firmly to the left of the marque's core customer base.

The two-door saloon was made available to limited markets. Including the 670 vehicles distributed within its home country, around 5000 were sold across a three-year production run, with the 242 GT making appearances in the USA, Canada and Europe. Curiously, the GT was never offered for sale in the UK, but more than 600 of them made their way to Australia – the original destination for this particular example, which was subsequently imported to Britain from Queensland in 2021.

Finn only acquired his rare 1979 242 GT in 2023, and while you may be disappointed that this isn't a tale of a 40-year ownership, it's worth pointing out that he is only 19 years old. Even more impressive is that, having bought his first Volvo – a 1990 240 estate that was found for sale at the right time and at the right price, and which would, ultimately, allow him to get insurance at such a young age – he then embarked on a well-executed programme of

'Aesthetics would count for little unless what was under the bonnet went some way to matching customer expectations'

modifications that transformed the previously standard load-lugger into a sleeper capable of 0-60mph in less than 8 secs, thanks to a quartet of motorcycle-sourced independent throttle bodies, and some suspension enhancements.

Finn has been around examples of the Swedish marque for most of his life, but his research made him aware of the now elusive 242 GT, only around 800 of which are still accounted for. When he came across one in the metal while seeking out a quad-headlight upgrade for the 240, he couldn't believe his luck: it was not only one of just a handful in the UK – only two of which were on the road – but also a rot-free example of the two-door rarity. The only problem? It wasn't for sale.

But good things come to those who wait, and Finn kept in touch with the owner until he agreed that it was time for the Volvo to find a new home. Finn jumped at the chance and immediately made his way across the country, did a deal and drove the car the 200 miles back to his rural Essex base – stopping *en route* to collect a Group A-spec cylinder head and a set of rare R-Sport 'Jet Cockpit' VDO gauges.

If the love affair with this elusive model was in its infancy then, by the time we take advantage of the open Tarmac, Finn presents the very definition of what a true niche-model enthusiast should be as he instantly offers a full rundown of just what makes his 242 GT stand out from other offerings of the period.

"There were three different styles of tail-light that appeared from 1979 to '81," he explains. "This one has the mid-spec 'stacked' style that was only in production for three months, but it also has the round headlights that were the only 7¼in units fitted by Volvo."

The orange and black twin stripes that wind their way down the bonnet, along the flank and over the bootlid before returning along the other side add to the manufacturer's efforts to give the sporting model a visual edge, while the saloon body – complete with front airdam, silver grille and inset driving lights – sits atop a set of 15in Virgo cast-alloy wheels. But the subtle styling flourishes don't stop there, as Finn explains: "The GT has a black headlining, which is unusual, but coupled with the lack of any highlighting trim, the factory-tinted Sunex windows and black, thick-cord seats, the interior feels very sporty and purposeful. Only the orange piping and central seat stripe lift the serious mood just a touch."

As you'd expect from something marketed with performance in mind, those aesthetics will count for very little unless what is under the bonnet has the ability to at least go some way to matching customers' expectations. The 2.3-litre, cast-iron block is paired with a high-compression, eight-valve, crossflow aluminium cylinder head, but the big news is that the 242 GT was one of the early Volvo models to be offered with fuel injection, and the Bosch K-Jetronic system most definitely helps hustle the sporty Swede along.

While the power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering offers a lighter touch, the sensibly sized steering wheel, stiffer-than-standard springs and dampers, and thicker front anti-roll bar all help address any risk of the GT feeling over-light. And although the ensemble under the bonnet isn't particularly tuneful or free-revving, neither is it afraid of being tested.

In practice, the tendency is to still treat the 242 like any other Volvo. That is where things go slightly wrong, however, mainly because it is capable of behaving just like any other 240, as it demonstrates the mild-mannered sensibility so valued by a certain car-buying demographic. Even the empty runway for our photoshoot isn't really the right testing ground for this special offering, because straight-line speed isn't necessarily the 242 GT's crowning glory – even if it is reportedly capable of a sub-10 secs 0-60mph time in 2.3-litre guise, a considerable jump from the 16 secs of a standard 242 DL.

All of this must leave you wondering just what is so special about the 242 GT? More to the point, if it *is* special, *when* does it show it? Well, the answer simple, and it fits in perfectly with why Volvo stuck the GT nomenclature on the bootlid in the first place: find yourself a great road and a reason to head in that direction, and then start driving. Exercising your right foot eventually rewards. There's no point expecting much dazzle below 3000rpm, but building confidence yields results as what is, up to that point, solid pulling power becomes something worthy of the performance label.

The bolstered squab of the driver's seat hugs your thighs as the Volvo encourages you to turn into bends faster and with more dedication. While the four-pot might not shove you out of corners with the finesse of an Italian sports car, it is enough to thrill – providing you make full use of the rev range and the four-speed 'box, with a lever-mounted overdrive switch giving instant access to useful extra ratios.

When the GT hits its stride – the suspension being stiff enough to minimise body roll, yet soft enough to provide a superbly comfortable ride – everything appears to come on song at the same time. Suddenly, the experience is on a par with that offered by more accomplished sporting rivals, but it needs to be driven properly in order to extract the best from it. Bizarrely, a Porsche 912 springs to mind: great underpinnings with the ability to offer a truly rewarding drive, albeit here with an engine that needs to be worked instead of relying on the might of its six-cylinder big brother.

Except that the Volvo never really feels as if it's ever truly on the edge. Even fully laden, its confidence on the road is rarely called into question as it ducks and dives through the picturesque scenery, the brakes confidently slowing progress when needed before the fuel injected 'four' winds back up again.

When the Australian *Wheels* magazine pitched the 242 GT against its Saab rival in 1979, the testers commented that it might benefit greatly 'from an exhaust note', but I wonder if, like for me, hindsight and a bit more time in the car might have promoted a rethink.

Many 242 GTs made their way directly from dealerships into private racing, and two such cars competed in the 1979 Repco Reliability Run – a 12,000-mile endurance event during which 167 crews attempted a 'lap' of Australia. Sadly, while a 244 came fourth in the hands of Ross Dunkerton, Peter McKay and Geoff Jones, behind a trio of Holdens led by Peter Brock, the best of the two-doors could only manage 30th.

Later that year, at the Bathurst 1000, Brock once again took top honours (this time in a Holden Torana), but McKay, paired with Spencer Martin, placed 20th out of more than 50 entrants in a largely unmodified 242 GT before reportedly driving it back home. That a virtually standard example was capable of such heroics was not lost on the buying public (nor on Brock, who went on to have a very successful career at the wheel of a Volvo 850), and many GTs were later converted to Turbo Group A spec, enjoying a successful overlap period of homologation racing against future icons such as the BMW E30 M3.

Back on the road and in 1981, the 240 GLT took over. The turbo era had begun and the GT's days were numbered, but, while its tenure was relatively brief, the presence of the 242 GT was the beginning of a remarkable period for a manufacturer still carrying that 'cardigan' stigma. For the time, the two-door Volvo was a relatively rapid car, and it could arguably be considered as one of the forefathers of the modern European performance saloon. Its subtle styling cues, tweaked suspension and impressive performance-to-weight ratio compared with a standard model helped set the ingredients list for future fast Volvos.

Far too caught up in a curious mixture of nostalgia and the misguided notion that 'loud means proud', I missed the point of the GT the first time I tasted it. Thank goodness I had the opportunity to go back for seconds.

'Everything comes on song at the same time, but it needs to be driven properly in order to extract the best from it'

Staid three-box profile defies expectations: the 242 GT delivers a genuinely rewarding and confident drive

VOLVO 242 GT

Sold/number built 1978-'81/c5000
Construction steel monocoque
Engine iron-block, alloy-head, sohc 2316cc 'four', Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection
Max power 140bhp @ 5750rpm
Max torque 140lb ft @ 4500rpm
Transmission four-speed M46 manual with overdrive, RWD
Suspension: front independent, by MacPherson struts **rear** live axle, trailing arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers, Panhard rod; anti-roll bar f/r
Steering power-assisted rack and pinion
Brakes ventilated front, solid rear discs, with servo
Length 16ft 1in (4900mm)
Width 5ft 7¼in (1710mm)
Height 4ft 8¾in (1440mm)
Wheelbase 8ft 8in (2640mm)
Weight 2844lb (1290kg) **Mpg** 30.4
0-60mph 9.8 secs **Top speed** 112mph
Price new US$15,995
Price now £10-14,000

The 2.3-litre 'four' isn't a monster, but delivers useful urge; aftermarket strut-brace aids stiffness

Clockwise from top: 15in Virgo alloys and discs all round; twin stripes adorn bonnet; 242 GT lived from 1978-'81. Below: adverts played on 242's motorsport associations

SWEDE DREAMS: BROTHERS IN ARMS

The eldest of the Shoolheifer brothers, Jake, kicked off his own Volvo ownership with the purchase of a 1991 2-litre 240 GL when he was 18. It was bought from an antiques dealer in Suffolk and proved to be the perfect solution to the crazy prices being quoted to insure even a basic Ford Fiesta as a new driver. The estate remained standard for the first 18 months, but rally-spec mudflaps and a roof-rack were soon added, although the latter did little for the performance.

"It was high up, bouncy and wasn't very good on motorways," recalls Jake. "You'd put your foot down and, although it got a bit louder, it didn't go any faster. When Finn then bought his own 240, I realised just how bad mine was!"

Jake then embarked on a series of much-needed improvements: "I lowered it, fitted uprated springs, adjustable Koni dampers and a sports exhaust, and bought a 'B-cam' from the USA. That made it much more torquey, but then in 2022 it developed a rod knock."

That inspired him to fit a replacement 2.3-litre turbo engine, plus a limited-slip differential and some new seats, make a full 3in stainless-steel exhaust system from scratch and uprate the fuelling. Although his Volvo is now on the road again and in regular use, he admits that there will always be the temptation to try and get a little bit more out of what was once the vehicle of choice for a certain, slightly older demographic. "There is nothing quite like a bit of brotherly competition to inspire a build," smiles Jake. "Although I'm not about to try and find my own 242 GT!"

Isle of Man-made Peels and storied Dunlop family Mini greet you at the entrance

Cutaway Sunbeam-Talbot 90 from 1948 British Motor Show. Below: Caddy Fleetwood hearse

Above, from top: stacked sandwich of Fiat Samanthas in varying states of decay; 1962 Nobel 200 microcar

Darren (on left) and dad Denis Cunningham with the collection that outgrew its London home

CLASSIC SHRINE

SPOT THE DIFFERENT

This outstanding collection of disparate motoring artefacts is nirvana for the open-minded enthusiast

WORDS **RICHARD HESELTINE** PHOTOGRAPHY **RICHARD DREDGE**

If there is a theme, it's that there is no theme: nothing can prepare you for the scale and scope of the Isle of Man Motor Museum. It's a collection like no other, home to everything from veteran electric cars to military vehicles, from extravagant hearses to racing motorcycles, via all manner of contraptions that defy easy categorisation. It is also a shrine to Americana, with a raft of cars on display that you are unlikely to encounter anywhere else, even in their homeland. The purpose-built facility that accommodates this leftfield cache is vast and airy, and the winning part is that you can get right up close to the exhibits. You will want to.

The funny thing is, the collection in its original form was based in London. Darren Cunningham, who inherited the bug from his father Denis, dreamed up the museum in order to see the entire family hoard accommodated under one roof. "Dad started out buying cars in the 1980s," he explains, "and the nucleus of the collection was his Jaguar XJ12 Coupé, a Rolls-Royce Corniche II and Camargue, plus various Humbers and a 1925 Cubitt. It grew from there. We had an eight-car garage and lock-ups scattered all over the place, and that no longer cut it – especially when we got into American vehicles. The first US purchase was a 1959 Cadillac ambulance."

Hence the decision to establish a permanent home for the collection, which, within a few decades, comprised around 130 vehicles. "It wasn't all cars, either," Darren adds. "There were lorries and buses, too. Having them all over the place wasn't ideal. Dad and I began looking for a suitable location, and we fell in love with the Isle of Man. That was in late 2013. We set about building the museum a year later and it opened in May 2015. Of course, we didn't stop collecting during that time, and since then we have built up relationships with the local enthusiasts and collectors. They have been extremely supportive."

What strikes you on entering the 75,000sq ft site is how the exhibits are juxtaposed; how, say, a 28-cylinder, 71.5-litre Pratt & Whitney

1992 Dodge Viper looms over Suzuki Cappuccino

Rolls-Royce Corniche II, known as the Guinness car

1964 Humber Super Snipe Series III from Australia

1970 American LaFrance, complete with sunfade

Morris Mini Cooper has extensive IoM rally history

Clockwise from main: Bond Bug 700ES; 1967 Commer Transporter; remarkable 1954 GM PD-4501 Scenicruiser

Tissier DS transporter, one of six, with rotary M35

'60 Dodge Polara (left) was first US road car added

Vast 1929 American LaFrance Type 147 Service Car

R-4360 Wasp Major cutaway engine seems a natural fit alongside a Dodge Viper. Oh, and not forgetting the Routemaster bus that Darren and friends drove 8000 miles across 27 states during an American road trip in 2010. "We also had a Fairway Driver taxi [black cab] with us. We did a further 5000 miles in that," he adds nonchalantly, before adding that he acquired the nearby 1954 GM PD-4501 Scenicruiser in 2013 and immediately drove it around 1000 miles to the Ghosts of Highway 61 historic coach event in Blytheville, Arkansas.

One of the few cars that is in the realm of the normal is on display near the entrance. It's a Mini City, acquired new by Isle of Man TT legend Joey Dunlop. "He taught his children to drive in it and the car remains in the family," Darren adds, before we move on to a marque that is inextricably linked with the island. The museum has an array of Peel products, the most recent of which is a different kind of Mini: "Peel Engineering produced some moulds for a glassfibre bodyshell for BMC during the 1960s, and they were further refined in Cowley. We recently purchased the original moulds, and have one of the completed prototype cars as well as a bodyshell it manufactured."

The Peel set also comprises the obligatory P50 and Trident microcars, as well as a Mini-based Viking kit, a P1000 sports car from the British Specials era, a monorail, motorcycle fairings and even some glassfibre aftermarket accessories for the Renault Dauphine. Moving further in, there's an array of Mopar products, with standouts including a 1957 Imperial Southampton Coupe and the crisply styled 1967 Imperial Crown Coupe with Mobile Director package. Then there are the various Lincolns, including a Brunn-bodied 1941 example with Sedanca-style body, a '55 Continental Mark II and the '65 Continental Executive Limousine that was built by Lehmann-Peterson for former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

The selection of 'professional cars' holds a particular fascination for Darren. "I suppose some people may find it morbid, but I think ambulances, hearses and flower cars are worth saving – worth celebrating – because they were among the last truly coachbuilt American cars," he muses. "They were supplied as bare chassis with only the front-end bodywork in place. There would be a few bits, like the rear bumper, tail-lights and minor items of trim for that particular model year, but otherwise it was up to the coachbuilder to make something special, sometimes as one-offs in the case of hearses and flower cars. Our '59 Lincoln flower car by National Body was truly one of a kind."

'If you are biologically hard-wired towards the esoteric, heaven awaits in the rich abundance of vehicles to take in'

Warming to the theme, he adds: "By their very nature, these cars spent their lives getting wet, with water from flowers constantly dripping everywhere, which didn't do much for their longevity. As such, there were three ways they could go: they could rust out and be scrapped, or they might get turned into pick-ups; if they were lucky, they would be restored."

And with that, we are whisked away to take in some airport shuttles – what else? – including a 28ft-long, Oldsmobile Toronado-based 1968 AQC Jetway 707, plus a bizarre eight-wheel-steered 1953 Willys, complete with a 327cu in Chevy V8 in its rump. It was built by Dick Cook, a collaborator with – and foil to – custom car culture guru Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth.

Rootes products hold a particular fascination for Denis, and the museum houses several small-series or one-off Humbers in particular. A Super Snipe Drophead Tourer built for – and used by – Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on their 1953-'54 Royal Tour of the Commonwealth is among the standouts. "I moved to London in the early 1970s and needed to earn some extra money, so decided to be a minicab driver in the evenings," recalls Denis. "My future brother-in-law had a Super Snipe for sale for £60. I could only afford half up front and promised him the balance as soon as I could. That same evening I started working on Holloway Road and I earned enough to pay him the remaining £30 the following day. I've always had at least one Humber since then."

Elsewhere, the wealth of exotica includes a smattering of Ferraris, if not necessarily the models you might expect to find in a museum. And then there's an assortment of Facel Vegas that are variously complete, partially restored or in the throes of decomposition, which makes for an arresting sight. And let's not forget the trio of Monicas, Jean Tastevin's ill-starred supersaloon, plus assorted Ted Martin V8s that were initially to have been fitted. "We have had car number one running," Darren says. "It was a fascinating project; we also have prototypes two and six."

Throw in an Intermeccanica-built Murena 429GT, a Zagato-styled Autech Stelvio and some designer Fiats (2300, 130 and Samantha coupés) for high glamour. Next, we are ushered towards an assortment of fire engines, a Gibbs Aquada amphibious car, some ex-Soviet spacecraft (of course), a self-propelled gun, a South African-made GSM Flamingo, some Japanese *kei* cars, a pair of rotary-engined Citroëns, a restored charabanc, a 1936 Daimler Double-Six 'invalid limousine' by Lancefield Coachworks – which is believed to have been built for the ailing King George V – and... well, you get the idea. The Isle of Man Motor Museum is unlike anything you can imagine, and we haven't even touched upon the many two-wheelers that play such an important role in the island's history.

The beauty here is that there is such a rich abundance of vehicles to take in, and you are guaranteed to find something of interest even if you are not biologically hard-wired towards the esoteric. If you are that way inclined, though, heaven awaits. "I suppose our tastes are for the unusual, and I like to think that is what makes the museum so interesting," Darren explains by way of a parting shot. "You'll see things here that you will not encounter anywhere else, and we rotate exhibits to keep things fresh. Visit several times and you will find something new each time." Just make sure that you set aside more than a few hours when visiting. You could easily lose days wandering between 550 vehicles, so an afternoon will be insufficient.

The knowledge

Name Isle of Man Motor Museum **Address** Jurby, Isle of Man IM7 3BZ **Where?** Sheading of Michael, northern Isle of Man **How much?** Adults £19.50, concessions £17.50, 5-15s £9.50 **Opening hours** Thurs-Sun, 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm) **Tel** 01624 888333 **Web** isleofmanmotormuseum.com

Modernist line-up: '82 De Lorean and '81 Lagonda

1952 Humber pick-up intended for Saudi oil fields

Turbocharged 1990 Autech-Nissan Zagato Stelvio

More Americana, with a 1962 Ford Thunderbird

1992 Peugeot 205 GTI and Ford Escort RS Turbo

1965 Amphicar Model 770 suits the island location

A late 1300 with (from left) Albert Chappe, Abel Chappe, Jean Gessalin and Louis Chappe

Catching sight of the summit

For a brief time, the small French firm of Chappe et Gessalin built a rival to the better-known Alpine. Jean Gessalin looks back on his successful but shortlived CG venture

WORDS **JON PRESSNELL** PHOTOGRAPHY ***C&SC* ARCHIVE**

Run by the three brothers Chappe and their nephew, Jean Gessalin, by the early 1960s Chappe Frères et Gessalin had become one of France's leading specialists in glassfibre bodywork. The firm had designed and built Alpine's first car, the A106, then its 2+2 and GT4 models, and created the body of the 2CV-based UMAP and provided the mouldings for DB's new 1959 Le Mans. It built the prototypes of René Bonnet's mid-engined Djet and, for Charles Deutsch, the steel prototype of the Panhard-CD, four 1962 Le Mans cars and production shells for the Panhard-CD.

It was an impressive roster of activity for the modestly sized, 20-strong company, based in the Seine-et-Marne town of Brie-Comte-Robert. But by 1965 the Alpine contracts were shrinking and the CD project was stumbling to an end, while the Djet had been taken under Matra's wing. There was a need to strike out in new directions. Accordingly it was decided to use the firm's expertise to produce a car under its own name, as Jean Gessalin relates.

"Subcontracting was too risky," he says. "Alpine was proof of that. They just cut us out. We never knew where we were – there was no long-term programme. Things just gradually tailed off. The CG car was absolutely to go into competition with Alpine, that was the objective. [Alpine founder] Jean Rédélé hadn't been kind to us. He'd left us on the touchline; we never got any royalties on the cars he made abroad."

The new car was based on the backbone chassis CG had designed for Alpine, but using the running gear of the rear-engined Simca 1000. This meant Fiat-inspired transverse-leaf front suspension, with an anti-roll bar, and rear coil springs and semi-trailing arms. Power came from a 44bhp version of Simca's 944cc cast-iron pushrod 'four', driving via its usual Porsche-synchromesh four-speed gearbox and cooled by a laterally sited rear radiator. Brakes, after the first seven cars, were discs front and rear, at first without a servo.

"It wasn't that we particularly liked Simca," admits Jean. "It was just that they were the only people suitable to work with us – and Simca didn't have a sports car. The Bertone Coupé was the closest it got to one. I was counting on its connection with Fiat – or rather Abarth. I thought Abarth might help, maybe with a five-speed gearbox. I hoped eventually to have access to a better set of mechanicals."

With a welded-in floor and box-section side members, the CG chassis was rigid and light. It carried open two-seater bodywork designed by Jean and used the windscreen of the Simca

1000 Coupé. The construction of the glassfibre shell was simple: front and rear mouldings, joined by separate sills, bolted and riveted to the chassis. Launched at the 1966 Paris Salon, the CG Spider 1000 was soon accompanied by a hardtop version. "The chassis was strong because it had been designed for an open car," observes Jean. "When we increased the power we never had to modify it."

The start-up was hesitant. Apparently the first few examples were based on Simca 1000s sourced from scrapyards, with local Simca concessionaire Ciret helping with parts. Only in spring 1968 was an agreement inked-in with Simca for the supply of complete powertrains. Even the CG's modest 640kg kerbweight couldn't counter the limited performance of the Simca 1000 engine. At 16,900 francs, the car was also relatively expensive.

For 1968, the CG took a key step fowards. There was the stripped-back, Ffr14,990 Sport 1000, missing bumpers, hubcaps and some interior trim. Delta-Mics alloys and inset long-range lamps were available as options, along with various stages of engine tune, up to an 1148cc unit with a claimed 90bhp. Then there was the standardisation of two new engines: the 49bhp 1118cc unit from the Simca 1000 Special to make the 1000S, and the 80bhp, twin-Solex 1204cc variant from Simca's revised Coupé for the 1200S. The cars also benefitted from the 1000's move to rack-and-pinion steering in place of the worm-and-roller type. On the 1200S, the radiator moved to the front, as on the Simca 1200S Coupé, and the brakes gained a servo, while the rear end was tied down more firmly with paired dampers at each wheel. For both engine sizes, hardtop and open versions continued to be offered, the latter retaining winding windows.

"After that, things started to take off," Jean recalls. "Customers began to take part in competitions, and the calibre of our work struck a chord. The finish of the cars was good: we were making impressive improvements in the quality of the moulds."

The smaller engine was deleted after just one season, and for 1970 Chappe et Gessalin offered only the 1200S, complete with a power hike to 85bhp; a little later that year the hardtop's roof became a bonded-in part of the body. Although the styling remained a touch amateurish and the utilitarian if well-equipped interior lacked flair, the company was now a genuine player in France's small specialist-car market. This status had been reinforced in late 1969 when distribution of the CG was taken on by Simca, which also extended its guarantees to the cars.

Relations with Simca – or Chrysler France as it became in 1970 – were good, remembers Jean, with warm support from the director of sales and marketing, William Reiber, and competition manager Henri Chemin. In 1970, the latter would expand Simca's competition championship to include CG – a valuable leg-up for the marque: "When we began to get results in competition they took notice – not least because someone in the Simca design office, Michel Liochon, bought a CG to go rallying."

By then CG had its own PR and competitions manager, Marc Seguin. "He had trained as an automotive engineer," says Jean. "He'd go to rallies at the weekend and look for good drivers who weren't tied down by a contract. He was dynamic, brave and tenacious – and good behind the wheel. He was a very good salesman and did an enormous amount to develop relations between Simca and CG. He also persuaded *Astérix* cartoonist Albert Uderzo to design the 'Coq Gaulois' emblem for us, after our buildings in the Rue du Coq Gaulois."

From left: 1200S coupé with its roof removed; 1000 Sports with bolt-on top fitted and optional Delta-Mics alloys

But to offer an effective competition car despite the limited power of the Simca engines, Jean had to focus on reducing weight. In this mission he was urged on by Matra engineer Bernard Boyer, who as son-in-law of Albert Chappe was very much part of the CG clan. Jean still recalls his sage words: "Everything that doesn't serve a purpose, get rid of it."

In 1969, and following this advice, the rear structure supporting the engine was cut away. The powerplant was held in place merely by two securing rods and a pair of lower mounts – not just reducing weight, but also diminishing its rearwards distribution. The next stage was to add the option of a supercharger.

Dubbed the 548, and latterly also available as an open *barquette*, this competition-only CG also had a thinner-gauge chassis, an aluminium floor and a lighter body. It could show the Alpines the way home and sold in decent numbers, according to Jean. "It was developed outside working hours," he adds. "Everything was done by hand and it didn't cost much."

Bolstered by the 548's success, Henri Chemin promoted the idea of a CG for rallying, using

OWNING A CG: 40 YEARS AND COUNTING

Few people can have greater experience of CGs than Eric Sance, owner since 1984 of one of the very last 1300s.

"I was a student at the time," Eric says. "My father was a Simca engineer, and when I was four a colleague of his arrived at the house with his CG. From that day I wanted one. When I was 17 I started the search, specifically for a 1300 with the 95bhp kit – the fastest road model."

Eventually Eric found a tired but original two-owner car, which he ended up rebuilding. Since then he has used it in slaloms and hillclimbs, and as a circuit-opener for historic events. "It has very good roadholding for a car of its age, helped by its wide track," he continues. "The chassis could take more power. I like its rear weight bias, which makes it fun on small roads. Stability is very good, but it is a bit sensitive to sidewinds. I just regret that the car was never available with the later 1442cc Simca engine, and a five-speed gearbox for cruising."

Eric rates his CG higher than the comparable Alpine: "It is better finished, waterproof and has good demisting. It's also more spacious, thanks to a 12cm-longer wheelbase. That it has lasted as well as it has – even the carpets are the originals – is a gauge of its quality. The Chappes were a talented bunch."

Radiator migrated to the front for 1204cc 'S' – this car has uprated twin-Weber engine

1200S coupé on Momo alloys; 13in rims were always wider at the rear

Bucket seats were moulded in-house; simple doors are opened via pull-cords

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The 1000 and 1200 models used tail-lights from a Simca 1000

a modified Chrysler 180 engine. Designed at Matra under Bernard Boyer and unveiled in July 1970, the mid-engined MC was put together over just five months, with an adapted CG coupé body. An open Spider version followed.

Jean is adamant that neither the competition activities nor the MC were overambitious, expensive distractions for the small company. "Everything we did with Chrysler was paid for by Chrysler, including the MC programme," he says. "Not only did we not spend a centime, but also the work we did was invoiced by the hour, and Matra gave us two draughtsmen to draw up the components."

Only five examples of the MC were built. It achieved honourable results, but wasn't campaigned in numbers sufficient to dent Alpine's dominance of French club motorsport. Jean hoped a road car might be spun off from the design: "The 180 unit was a bit heavy – a real lorry engine – but we thought we could profit from the aura of the MC to do something along those lines, with a mid-mounted engine."

Meanwhile, the 1200S evolved into the restyled CG 1300, powered by the 1294cc engine of the Simca 1000 Rallye 2. Output was 3bhp down on the 1204cc unit, but with more torque at lower revs; kerbweight, meanwhile, rose to 760kg. Introduced at the 1972 Paris Salon, the coupé-only 1300 had a substantially revised and shorter rear, with more angular lines and a bigger window, now glass. The wheelarches had more pronounced flares, while at the front there was a small chin spoiler, the auxiliary lights were more deeply recessed and the indicators moved to sit under the headlights. Other changes included a return to a single damper at each rear wheel and the suppression of the servo – but uprated brakes with twin-pot front calipers and larger rear calipers were optional.

"It was the car in its most developed form; it's the one to buy," says Jean. "It goes, and it's well balanced. It still had a transverse leaf at the front, but I think we added a bit of negative camber. Above all, there was the possibility of extra power – 95bhp – thanks to the availability of a modified head, plus a CG manifold and twin Webers instead of Solexes. We were helped by a Simca engineer. He was getting bored, so we recruited him."

Production was by then in the order of 10 cars per month, and the company had boosted its payroll from 39 employees in 1971 to 48 – just below the threshold of 50, at which point more onerous French employment rules came into play. Chrysler had introduced its Matra-Simca Bagheera, undoubtedly a more modern vehicle and often described as being a major factor in the ending of CG production. The Bagheera was cheaper than the 1300, but aimed at a different market (as had been the case with the Simca 1200S Coupé) and, at the time, CG's modest output of a maximum 100 cars per year appeared unthreatened.

But then came the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the Fuel Crisis, the lowering of speed limits and finally, in November of that year, the banning of motorsport activities in France, which in turn led to Chrysler abandoning its support for the MC programme.

"We had a pretty full order book for the 548, and we had 30 orders for the 1300 after the previous motor show," recalls Jean. "Then, from one day to the next, all the orders were cancelled. What with that and the new speed limits, people saw no interest in buying a CG."

Driving the nails further into the coffin, Chrysler stopped supplying components. In May '74, Chappe Frères et Gessalin was wound up, ending nearly 40 years of noteworthy endeavour in the backwaters of the French motor industry, including the manufacture of a little under 400 CGs – around 30 of the 1000 and 1000S, 270 of the 1200S and 95 of the 1300.

Jean describes the closure decision as consensual but abrupt: "It was only external events. We were making adequate money, but the rally ban arrived just when we were at our most vulnerable. My uncles were at retirement age, so two of them decided to retire."

But that wasn't the end of the story. Jean, supported by Louis Chappe, rented part of the CG factory to make crash helmets. Within 10 years, GPA helmets led the market and were Formula One and motorcycle GP scene fixtures.

Jean is not convinced that Chappe Frères et Gessalin needed to be closed, especially given that there was the possibility of carrying on with subcontract work: "We were moulding the bucket seats for the Simca Rallye 2, and that was earning decent money. A subcontractor did the covering, and the seats just shot out of the door – we had to build more factory space. But we were set up to make cars. It was difficult to change direction."

A 1300 chassis receives its shell; late examples of the 1200S also used this body

Thanks to *Eric Sance, Gérard Magrot and François Oligo*

Left to right: competition-special 548 *barquette* tackles a 1974 hillclimb; mid-engined MC was a collaboration with Matra; MC Spider on the 1972 Critérium des Cévennes

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HWM-CHEVROLET

RUN BY Simon Taylor
OWNED SINCE July 2000
PREVIOUS REPORT June '24

SPRINGING INTO FASTER TIMES

We are all only too aware of the proliferation of potholes on our roads. In an everyday car they can give you a puncture, or worse. In an old sports-racer with rock-hard suspension they can be disastrous. I do my best to steer round them, but on a busy A-road in Wiltshire there was one I couldn't miss. It inflicted serious damage on the Stovebolt Special, and lost me two months of my hillclimb season. It also introduced me to a pair of true artisans who practise the dying art of making bespoke leaf springs.

The HWM has transverse leaves front and rear. The bottom leaf of the front spring curls around the base of each upright, providing the lower location as well. The impact snapped that locating leaf.

There are still a few specialists who make leaf springs to order. I asked around, and a couple of well-known restorers spoke highly of Rossendale Road Springs. I called Geoff Clowes at RRS, who understood my problem at once. Sean McClurg stripped the HWM's front end to extract the spring, and I drove it up to the little Lancashire town of Rossendale.

Stovebolt's bottom leaf snapped in two

RRS has been going since 1947, when leaf springs were used by most cars, plus everything from trucks to milk floats. Nowadays most of its work is for classics and historic racing cars: from an 1897 Excelsior three-wheeler to an aero-engined Special. Horse-drawn carriages, too. The day I was there, springs were being made for a Vauxhall 30/98, an Austin A35 and a Lancia Fulvia.

The strips of steel are cut and heated in the furnace, which runs at a frightening 1100°C. Then they are shaped with tongs and a six-pound hammer, plunged into tempering oil and back into the furnace at a more friendly 540°C. The man with the tongs and the hammer is Geoffrey Stephenson, who started at RRS when he was just 15 years old. He says: "After 52 years I'm never bored, because every spring is different."

The Stovebolt's original front spring, fitted when the HWM was re-engined in 1955, used steel of $^{3}/_{16}$in thick, whereas Rossendale usually uses quarter-inch steel. So, to get back to the correct spring rate, three leaves were discarded and two new ones made up – including the curled-end bottom leaf, of course. The leaves had all become distorted over time, so they were reshaped, and the whole spring was reset. All this was done in just four weeks, and at surprisingly reasonable cost. Thank you, Geoff and Geoffrey.

The blessed Sean then put everything together again, and the car was ready for August's Gurston Down meeting. Gurston starts by plunging downhill, and at the

From top: hammer shapes spring; 30/98 pair; HWM spring beautifully remade

Understeer in, oversteer out: a bootful of throttle pedal gets the Stovebolt Special out of the tight left-hander at Gurston Down

STEVE LISTER

bottom there's a fast, deceptive left-hander before it climbs steeply into a hairpin right. Then a switchback hump, a tight left, and a straight run to the finish – except it's not straight. At nearly 100mph, if you don't get the line exactly right you end up in the boonies.

Having done the hill just before my spring broke, I had a direct comparison. The Stovebolt is an understeerer until you get the power on: then the tail tries to come round to meet you. No doubt helped by having all the leaves reset, the front appeared to bite better going into the tight corners. Sean had set everything up just right, and I knocked almost a second off my previous best time.

During the season, apart from visits to my beloved Shelsley, I also made the trip to Devon and Wiscombe Park. Wiscombe starts at the bottom of a valley beside a beautiful manor house and climbs 1000 yards between rhododendron bushes and bluebell glades via fast blind swerves and two tight hairpins. The paddock is on the steep hillside, with no shelter, and if it rains it can be miserable. This time the weather was perfect. I had not competed there for 20 years and it took a lot of re-learning, but by the end of the weekend my times were quite respectable.

And now the long wait until April, and the HWM's 76th season.

RADwood style, parked next to Maserati Ghibli and other retro fare

TOYOTA MR2 Mk2

RUN BY Charlie Calderwood
OWNED SINCE March 2024
PREVIOUS REPORT July 2024

Despite my job, I've never really been one for displaying my cars at shows. That said, I don't think I've owned much that anyone would have been particularly keen to see recently, but the MR2 and RADwood brought something new out in me. I'm proud of the car and this event is full of others I'm eager to see. So, in September, I created the closest thing to an early '90s costume I could from what I had in my wardrobe, and headed down to Chatham Dockyard.

There were two other Mk2 MR2s there, a lightly modified JDM Turbo and one dressed as a Ferrari 348, so I thought I had a nice niche as the sole stock UK car in front of the old boats (by which I mean the Tall Ships of this historic venue, not Nathan Chadwick's Maserati Ghibli). I'm in no doubt that the original supercharged Mk1 MR2 was the coolest Toyota there, however, while the Space Cruiser must have been the rarest.

A few weeks later, I found myself on a packed train that had become too warm for my winter coat, so I stowed it – with my car keys inside – on an overhead shelf and promptly walked off without it half an hour later. The car didn't come with a spare, only a genuine Toyota blank, and after no response from Lost Property, it became clear I was going to have to replace the keys.

Steven Eagell Toyota in Cambridge told me it could get me a new, genuine key in a week for just £27, but then phoned me a week later to say it didn't have the codes after all. I was at least recommended a locksmith accustomed to older Toyotas, and £80 later I had a fresh key cut from my existing blank, as well as a repaired boot lock. Previously it had only opened from a lever inside the cabin.

But that wasn't the end of it, because I'd also lost my remote for the aftermarket immobiliser, which appeared to date from the 1990s. At first, I had resigned myself to the arduous job of removing it. However, once back in the car I was able to identify the system, a Laserline, and discovered that a very helpful third-party specialist, Bridgwater Electronics in Somerset, was able to sell me two new touch-sensor keys and reprogramme the existing hardware if I sent it over, all for a very reasonable £48.

After 21 days, I was back in and, after a slightly longer crank than usual, the Toyota fired right up. This was distinctly different to the electrically troubled Smart Roadster Coupé – which, I'm relieved to say, has finally sold.

Right: aged immobilser was sent off in the post. Below: touch-sensor unlocked by new keys

MEET THE FLEET

AARON McKAY *(Deputy editor)*
1972 Volkswagen Type 2 Dormobile
1985 BMW 325i

ALASTAIR CLEMENTS *(Editor in chief)*
1957 MG Magnette ZB
1983 Suzuki Cervo CX-G
2006 Mini Cooper Convertible

CHARLIE CALDERWOOD *(Features editor)*
1992 Toyota MR2 Mk2

DAMON COGMAN *(Art editor)*
1968 Volkswagen Type 3 Fastback
2005 BMW Z4 2.2i

GAYNOR CAUTER *(Contributor)*
1965 Jaguar E-type S1 4.2 OTS
1967 Jaguar 420

GRAEME HURST *(Contributor)*
1957 Austin-Healey 100/6
1958 Jaguar XK150 OTS
1966 Ford Mustang GT
1970 Citroën ID21 Safari
1979 Porsche 911SC
1982 Mercedes-Benz 280TE
1986 BMW 745i

JAMES MANN *(Photographer)*
1962 Hotchkiss M201 Jeep

JAMES PAGE *(Contributor)*
1931 Austin Seven saloon
1970 MG 1300

JON PRESSNELL *(Senior contributor)*
c1933 Austin Seven Special
1964 MG Midget
1987 Renault 4 Savane

JULIAN BALME *(Senior contributor)*
1932 Ford Roadster
1940 Lincoln-Zephyr Continental
1954 Lincoln Cosmopolitan
1957 Ford Ranch Wagon
1962 Triumph TR4
1964 Ford Falcon Sprint
1964 Ford Galaxie 500
1967 Triumph Spitfire MkIII
1970 Lotus Elan +2

LIZZIE POPE *(Associate editor)*
1965 Ford Mustang
2007 Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport

MALCOLM McKAY *(Contributor)*
1961 Morris 1000 Traveller
1967 Jaguar E-type S1 4.2 2+2
1969 Marcos 3-Litre
1973 Jaguar XJ6 S2 4.2

MARTIN BUCKLEY *(Senior contributor)*
1960 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II
1962 Chevrolet Corvair 700
1966 Oldsmobile Toronado
1970 Lancia Flaminia Berlina
1970 Renault 16 TS
1972 NSU Ro80
1974 Fiat 130 Coupé
1978 Lancia Gamma Berlina
1981 Range Rover

MARTIN PORT *(Contributor)*
1934 Austin Seven Special
1958 Land-Rover Series One 88in
1959 Land-Rover Series II 88in

MICK WALSH *(International editor)*
1949 Lea-Francis 14hp Sports
1967 Alfa Romeo Duetto

PAUL HARDIMAN *(Senior contributor)*
1972 Ford Escort Mk1

RYAN STANDEN *(Editorial assistant)*
1976 Reliant Scimitar GTE

SIMON HUCKNALL *(Senior contributor)*
1977 Fiat 128 1300 CL

SIMON TAYLOR *(Editor at large)*
1937 Bentley Gurney Nutting Sedanca
1950/'56 HWM-Chevrolet
1961 AC Ace 2.6
1969 Chevrolet Corvette

Repaired and repainted wheels have helped make the 19-year old Z4 look like new again

BMW Z4 2.2i

RUN BY Damon Cogman
OWNED SINCE June 2021
PREVIOUS REPORT Aug '24

The BMW continues to serve as my everyday workhorse, but, depressingly – and thanks to the non-existent summer – the roof has stayed in place far too much for my liking. However, with reduced options when it comes to showing off the BMW's angular lines in the sunshine, attention has instead turned to getting a few aesthetic jobs ticked off the list.

After the recent bodywork and headlight refresh, the 18in wheels suddenly looked a bit tired to say the least. Nearly 20 years of hard use meant the original silver paint and lacquer were flaking and peeling away, and there was the odd brush with a kerb to deal with.

Before I could go anywhere near the alloys, though, I needed to get four new tyres ordered. The rubber was a mismatch of makes, which definitely doesn't help when it comes to getting the most from a performance car such as this. After some research on what would be the best option for the Z4, I ordered a set of Falken Azenis FK520s, swayed by the company's claims of motorsport-inspired technology. Well, if they're good enough for the GT3 Porsches pounding round the Nürburgring for hour after hour, then they're certainly good enough for my humble BMW. According to the spec, a layer of heat-resistant aramid fibre reinforces the tyre, making the structure more stable at speed. Perfect for my Sunday jaunts around the Surrey Hills. A weight saving of 10% over the previous range is welcome, too: reducing unsprung weight and rolling resistance are big bonuses for handling and economy.

Falken rubber is proving to be a worthy weather adversary

With the car up on the ramps at my local Protyre in Guildford, however, the wheels came off – metaphorically as well as literally. On closer inspection, the rims had suffered a hard life: one had two tiny cracks on the inside, another had a larger crack, and all four had suffered various dents and dings. This meant the planned trip to a wheel-refurbishing outfit had taken on a whole new perspective. Things were so bad the buckled rims were almost on their way to the scrap pile before alloy-wheel specialists Zak, Jay and Zaeen at Alloy Kings in Feltham stepped in and saved the day.

Welding an aluminium alloy is tricky work. The metal is delicate and needs careful attention to avoid making things worse. Fortunately, the Alloy Kings have seen wheels more damaged than mine in their 10 years of experience so weren't fazed, and they set about welding up the cracks and turning the nearly oblong wheels back into perfect silver circles. Once the refinished alloys were ready, a final coat of metallic silver was powder-coated on to provide a tough, long-lasting and sparkling finish.

Protyre took great care when refitting

I couldn't be happier with the result, and I'm now parking a good foot or so further from the kerb to make sure they stay that way.

With such gloriously shiny wheels, attention then turned to fitting the tyres that Protyre still had waiting from my previous visit. The folks there took an exceptional amount of care with the now immaculate rims – they even dusted off their vintage wheelbrace to undo and redo the nuts manually so they didn't risk doing any damage with the air gun. Very much appreciated, and it shows that old-car fans still pop up even in fast-fit tyre places.

I can report that the new rubber has transformed the handling of the old Beemer. With such an onslaught of rain in recent weeks, the tyres have endured a baptism of, er, water that has tested the braking distances and cornering adhesion. I've found that the new grip levels have been most obvious around greasy roundabouts and on sliproads where the Z4 had sometimes wriggled nervously. I'm looking forward to spending the winter getting more miles under the BMW's new wheel-and-tyre combination during the impending even colder and wetter months, when the roof will – sadly – likely remain resolutely up.

Thanks to *Falken (falkentyre.com); Protyre Autocare, Guildford (01483 944738; protyre.co.uk); Alloy Kings (020 8897 1968; alloykings.co.uk)*

From left: worrying damage; new weld joined a previous repair; getting it perfectly round again

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Very wet trip to Goodwood for the Revival tested DiY carb tweaks and highlighted the roof's propensity to leak

LAND-ROVER SERIES II

RUN BY Martin Port
OWNED SINCE March 2016
PREVIOUS REPORT Oct 2024

With summer finally arriving, it was nice once again to have the Series II at my disposal. There were, however, a few niggles that needed addressing first, not least with the fuelling.

All three of the Series IIs that I have run on a daily basis have been fitted with a Weber 34ICH carburettor – a popular conversion at one time. With essentially the same set-up on this one, I have experienced returns of anything between 13 and 22mpg.

Swapping the Weber on my current steed for the original 1959 Solex proved to be enlightening, and although it ran smoothly, I found myself watching the fuel gauge needle almost falling before my eyes. A look at the spark plugs suggested the engine was running rich, but tweaks failed to improve things, so I consulted Martin Lawrie, who had rebuilt the Solex a few years back. We went through some basic tests, but he reminded me that mine was fitted with an 'Econostat' circuit. This basically means it has an additional fuel-delivery tube that, once a vacuum is formed, sucks an extra delivery of petrol directly from the bottom of the float bowl; this is designed to actually improve the economy on a cruising throttle.

For whatever reason, fuel was being unceremoniously dumped into the carburettor from both feeds as soon as I touched the accelerator, which explained the 7mpg I had been suffering. My wallet couldn't handle this kind of 'economy' feature, and while I was sitting in a Welsh campsite, having left the Series II at home after forecasting fuel costs of £350 for the trip, it dawned on me that by plugging up the Econostat feed it would in effect mean I'd be running a 'normal' Solex.

Cutting down and putting a slot into the top of an M6 bolt provided a blanking plug I could use to replace the troubled Econostat jet. Happily, the results were instant. The spark-plug colour alone was conclusive, and although on the road the difference was barely noticeable, there was one obvious exception: the fuel gauge was no longer mocking me as I drove. Over a longer run to Goodwood for the Revival, I confirmed the heady figure of 15mpg. The Solex will still never be as economical as a Weber, but this is a decent compromise, and the rebuilt engine is at least getting the fuel delivery intended by the factory.

The Goodwood trip provided another insight: as biblical rains accompanied both our journey and the full day at the circuit, it wasn't surprising that the inside of the Land-Rover was almost as wet as the outside. However, it did inspire me to finally investigate, particularly because the water ingress had been getting worse.

Precipitation tends to seep in where the roof meets the external guttering, so various sealants and layers of tape had inevitably been applied over the years. I didn't particularly want to deconstruct the roof, reseal it and rivet it back together – all the more so because I was now dependent on the 88in being my daily driver again – but, following a suggestion by fellow owner Calum Barrow, I stripped everything off the guttering and applied two coats of liquid-rubber paint. I'm probably the only owner who rushed outside at the first sign of a downpour, but my joy at then not getting a pint of cold rainwater down the back of my neck when pulling out of the driveway was unrestrained.

Other autumn preparation has included finally welding in a replacement tube for one of the door-top posts – the original was sacrificed seven years ago when removing the old, rusted-in-place units – and some fluid changes. The first post-rebuild oil swap was trouble free, with nothing particularly worrying in the dropped 20w50. Then both the gearbox and transfer box were drained and refilled with EP80/90 – mostly for peace of mind since they hadn't been done for a while.

Next up will be sorting the leaking clutch master cylinder and starting a vanity project with the recreation of one part that was evident during first owner Philip Kohler's trans-African sojourn, but that failed to remain with the Series II. More on that next time...

Lower of the two delivery tubes is the supposedly fuel-saving Econostat feed

Replacing the 'eco' jet with homemade blank halved the fuel consumption

Liquid-rubber paint in gutter finally prevented hardtop water ingress

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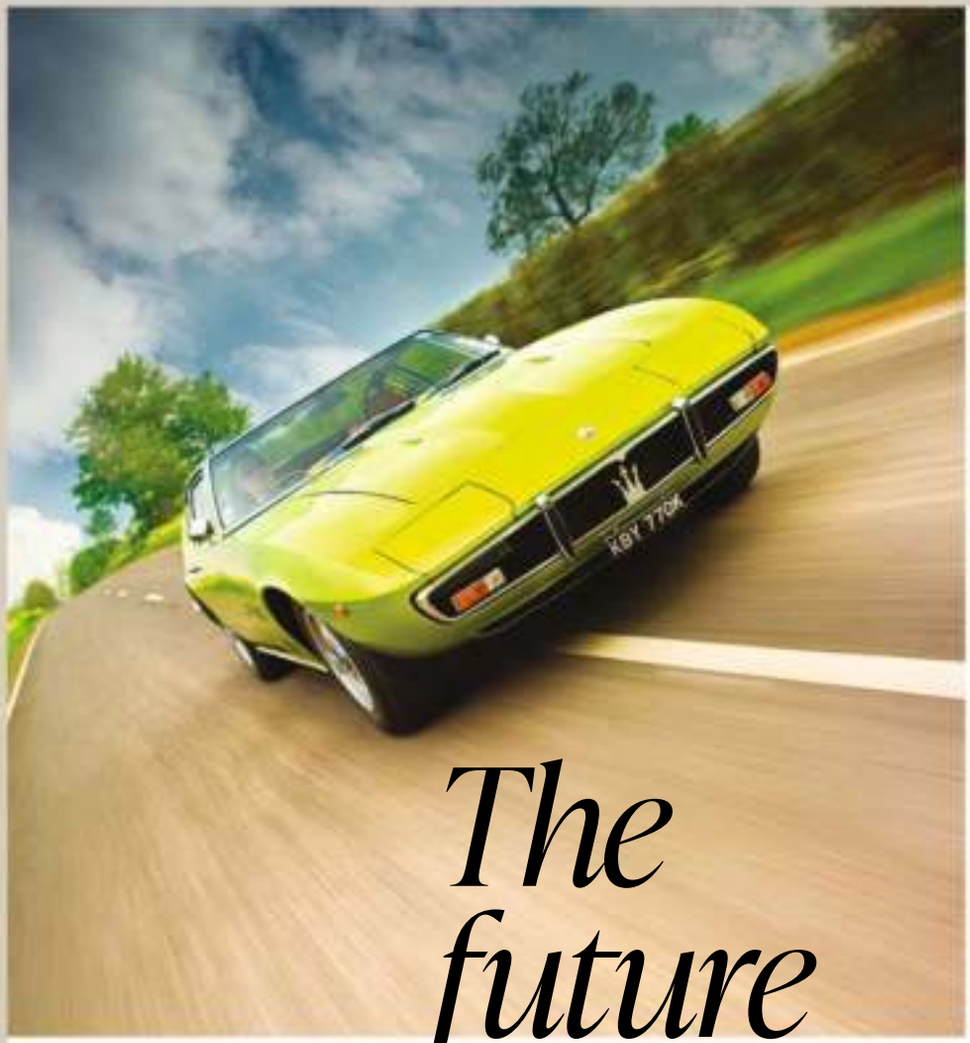

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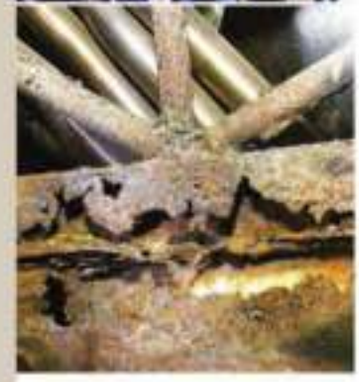

Protection from rust has not always been a priority, even for major manufacturers, and many vehicles rolled off the production lines with untreated areas of their chassis exposed to the elements. As a result, rot remains the biggest enemy of the classic car movement, with countless examples sadly lost to corrosion over the years.

Prevention is always better than a cure, which is why Essex-based firm Corotec's services are increasingly being sought by *cognoscenti* and collectors alike. Corotec is a Dinitrol UK-approved corrosion-control specialist, offering sophisticated solutions to discerning classic car owners across the UK and Europe. Run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts, its artisan intervention is arguably the most critical in the life of your beloved classic, and will safeguard its future for the next generation.

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Grahame poses proudly with his Spitfire: it's a classy restoration done on a controlled budget

TRIUMPH SPITFIRE 1500

OWNED BY Grahame Farr
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COUNTING THE COST OF A CLASSIC

I've loved classic cars for as long as I can remember. While my friends had pictures of rock bands in their bedrooms, I would stare at my Series 1 E-type poster for hours.

Over the past couple of years I've been on a journey that has demonstrated how to enjoy classic car ownership on a tight budget – yes, it can be done! It hasn't all been happiness and laughter – and, yes, managing the finances has been challenging. But I believe the cost is justified when you take into account the increased value of the car, the joy of ownership and my own self-development.

Before I started looking at suitable models, I made friends with my wonderful local old-car community – the Basingstoke Classic Car Club – who welcomed me with open arms and gave so much priceless advice. Then, in June 2020, I took the plunge and bought a 1980 Triumph Spitfire 1500 for £3200. It was in need of some TLC, so I handed over the cash and crossed my fingers.

My new (old) car passed its MoT with only oil-leak advisories, and so my journey with 'Bee' began. Quick, confidence-building wins followed: an £8 sensor fixed the temperature gauge, and an engine service had it running sweetly.

The plan was to return the Spitfire back to factory-fresh condition, so anything that could be stripped and refinished got the treatment, and I removed all of the black paint under which a previous owner had hidden all the chrome. A side project to find a set of original 5.5 x 13in steel wheels also began; little did I know this alone would take 18 months.

The first major job was to renew the soft-top, and The Motor Garage down the road in Netheravon did some first-class work. Next was replacement of the chattering diff and rear leaf spring, which was completed in a long day with my amazing friend, Ralph. On to another sizeable task: rebuilding the dilapidated seats. I decided to stretch the budget and took them to Newton Commercial in Suffolk, who did a stunning job.

With the dreaded 'Spitfire rattle' being heard during cold starting, I had to make a return trip to The Motor Garage for a diagnosis. The remedy? An engine rebuild, and a new clutch to boot. It had to be done, but that one hurt a little.

Two years on and I had spent £8000. Clearly, Bee needed more than just TLC, but let's break it down. After the purchase price (the result of two years' saving), repair costs amounted to £4800 over 22 months. That's less than £220 a month, and there are plenty of hobbies that may appear less expensive than owning a classic car but cost more than this. For that outlay, I now have a chair at the table: living my dream without having to remortgage the house. My evenings and weekends are spent with my pride and joy, whether that's maintaining, fixing, driving or meeting up with friends and fellow enthusiasts.

I spent more than planned, but the cost has been spread out. If there was something to fix but the cash wasn't there, I simply waited until payday. One thing is certain: I wouldn't have managed to save as much money as the Spitfire is now worth. To summarise: you can follow your dream without bankrupting yourself.

Neither could I have done it without my wife and daughter being so understanding, or my great friend Ralph and other generous mentors. Thanks, too, to all the fantastic BCCC members.

Seat refurbishment was a top-notch job

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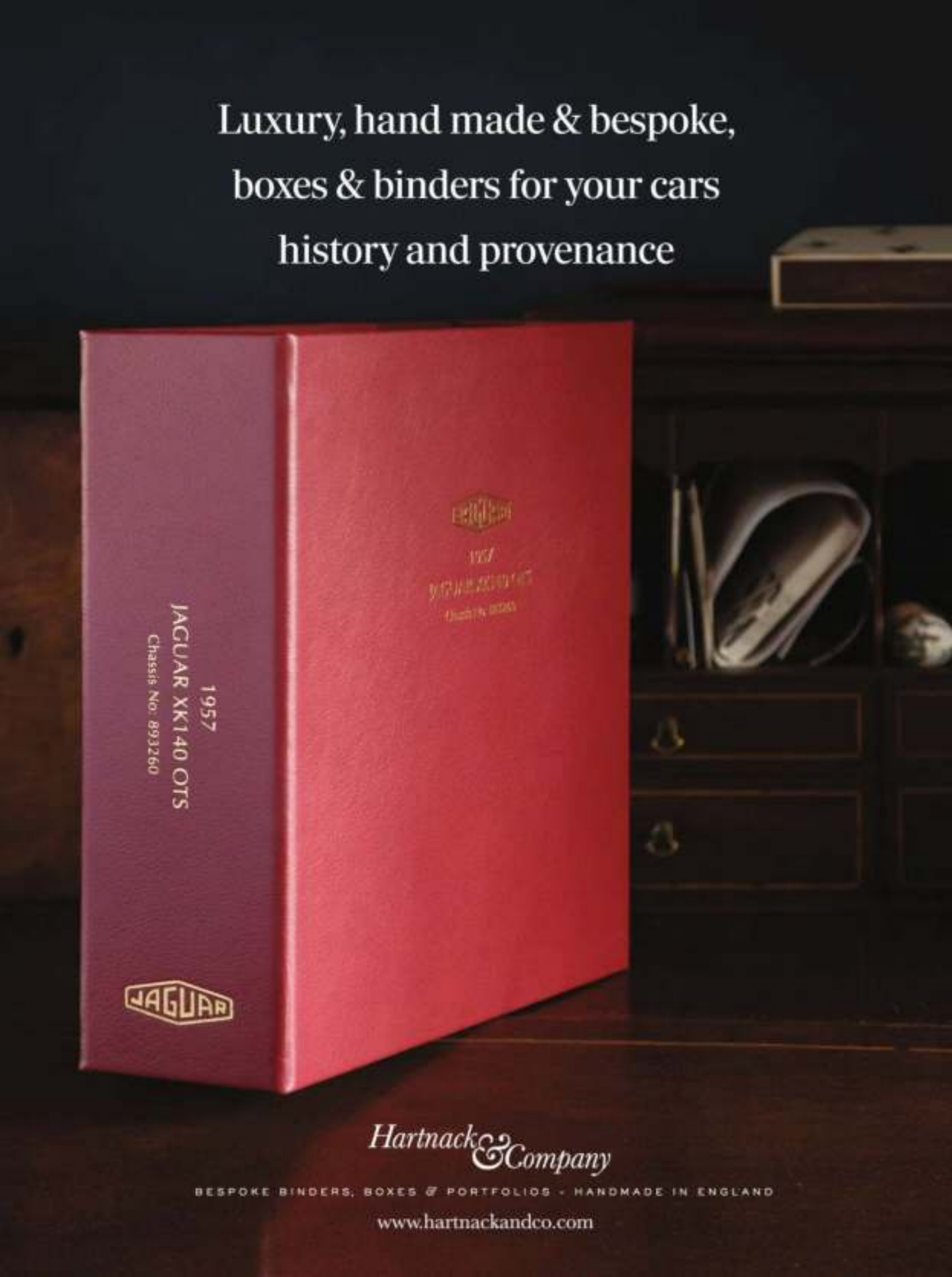

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Clockwise from main: Mini memorabilia collection gets a room to itself; boxed kits; Innocenti features strongly

GIULIETTE WIRTZ

This passionate enthusiast reserves a big place in her heart for a very small car

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **MARIO LAGUNA**

"It is a disease," admits Giuliette Wirtz, obsessive collector of all things Mini. "I buy models not only because of their rarity or value, but also because I like the forms, the colours – or simply to remind me of the place or the occasion where I found them. Every one of my models, even the most ordinary and the cheapest, brings back a happy memory because I don't use the internet to find them, so I can remember the shops or the people who sold them to me."

Giuliette's Mini collection now numbers a few hundred miniatures, but she also gathers period marketing brochures, parts catalogues, books and magazine features focusing on Alec Issigonis' pint-sized marvel, along with workshop manuals, black-and-white press photographs, promotional items and almost anything with a Mini printed on it.

"I'd say the rarest models in my collection are the plastic toys made in Japan, which are hard to find in Europe," continues Giuliette, "but I really wouldn't be able to choose a favourite. The 'unicorn' for most Mini collectors appears to be a 1:43-scale Morris Mini-Minor Pop Art, number 349, which was briefly available only to Corgi Club members by mail-order. I think it's totally crazy to pay £5000 for a model, even in pristine original condition – mine is far from perfect, but it was a lot cheaper than that."

Another miniature worthy of note is the 1:10-scale Mini Sport Rally car, NCK 453P, said to be the ultimate road-rallying Mini. It was created by MAD to celebrate 50 years of Mini Sport, is one of only 20 made and was bought at auction. "Perhaps one of the biggest in the collection, and for sure the heaviest," says Giuliette.

With (from left) 1960 Morris and '67 Innocenti Minis

Giuliette is mother to a son whom she hopes will carry on with the hobby, and is happily married to Jim, who is not only very supportive but also a huge Mini nut himself: the couple founded the Luxembourg Mighty Mini Frënn (friends) club in 1999. "I met Jim in 1987 when I was in a showroom buying a secondhand Mini – my first," she recalls. "It was a 1985 Innocenti in Mayfair spec, which I still drive today. The seller didn't know all the details I was asking for, and Jim, who was only there browsing, was very helpful in answering my questions."

At present the couple has amassed a huge, 21-strong collection of full-sized Minis, including a pair of genuine rally cars with impressive histories. "Both are true gems for Mini aficionados," explains Jim, "but delving into the history of our ex-Julien Vernaeve 1969 Cooper 'S' was thrilling because we hadn't known about it when we bought the car at auction." In it, Vernaeve came first in class and 24th overall on the 1969 Tour de France.

Giuliette's daily drivers are a highly original, right-hand-drive 1960 Morris Mini-Minor and an unrestored 1967 Innocenti Mini with 91,700km on the clock. "Only 37bhp might not seem like much by modern standards, but it is enough for commuting, shopping, weekend fun runs and club meetings," she smiles.

"A highlight in my Mini life was welcoming the late Paddy Hopkirk to our marque tribute at the LuxExpo event in March 2020. Paddy was such a charming, unpretentious gentleman and a captivating character. He became a hero when he won the Rallye Monte-Carlo in 1964, but to me his biggest achievement was the third in class and seventh overall he took on the Tour de France the previous year, behind two Ferrari 250GTOs, a 250GT SWB, two Jaguar E-types and an Alfa Giulia TI. In a Mini, of course."

Christmas GIFT IDEAS

An inspirational selection of perfect presents for the petrolhead in your life

OBSESSED WITH CARS

Obsessed With Cars has a huge range of high quality die-cast models including replicas from Le Mans, Formula One and rallying, plus an array of road cars and movie vehicles. A neat search tool enables you to browse by criteria such as driver, team, manufacturer, year and more. In addition, a selection of gifts for petrolheads includes keyrings, valve caps, wall art, circuit-outline stickers and numberplates from TV and film. You're sure to find the perfect stocking-filler!

Pictured: Ferrari F2007, £24.50; Porsche 917, £29.50; Ford Escort, £32.50; metal keyring, £8.50; leather keyring, £9.50; braided keyring, £11.50; BMW M3 keyring, £12.50; valve caps, £6.50; Heel Tread socks, £9.50; mug, £9.50
obsessedwithcars.co.uk

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Hate drying the car? Banish washing blues with the Race Glaze Water Filter, proven since 2012, which produces spot-free water so you'll never have to dry a car again. A resin bed removes all dissolved minerals for a quick rinse with tap water after washing, then just walk away. Three sizes of refillable units are available from £114.99, with refills from £48.50. Typically, the smallest 7-litre unit provides 50 rinses in very hard water areas, the 14-litre and 25-litre units far more.
01780 654065; raceglaze.co.uk

AUTOBOOKS-AEROBOOKS

Paul Breuer has been passionate about cars and drawing since childhood, which is how he discovered his vocation as an automotive designer. After his art studies, in 1966 he tried his luck with the great Italian coachbuilders and became the first Belgian stylist in Italy when he was hired by OSI. At Fiat he designed the 128 Sport, launched in 1972, before being hired by Ford to work for Ghia, where he styled show cars exhibited at motor shows in Europe and the USA. He collaborated with Mitsubishi, Saab, Seat and De Tomaso, then in 1985 took the step of becoming a freelance designer, creating not only cars but also boats, caravans, excavators, trains and cable-car cabins. His 253-page book *Car & design, passion & destiny* has text in Italian and English, and is available for $69.95 from Autobooks-Aerobooks.
autobooks-aerobooks.com

BMW BEHIND THE SCENES

Looking for the perfect way to spend your Christmas cash? *BMW Behind the Scenes*, a winner at the Royal Automobile Club's Motoring Book of the Year Awards 2024, is an obvious choice. This extraordinary set of books, praised for its in-depth research and stunning design, captivates not only BMW fans but anyone who is passionate about automotive styling. With unparalleled insights, it offers a behind-the-scenes perspective on how classic and modern cars are crafted. For the ultimate experience, the complete set is available for £235, including shipping. Or, if you're after a single volume, *BMW by Design* is priced at £79.95. These exceptional, beautifully crafted titles reset the bar for book design, making them essential for all enthusiasts. ***stevesaxty.com***

BE-SEEN-SCREEN

This award-winning safety banner has a high degree of reflectivity thanks to the Pixel within the material, and heat-sealed edges to prevent water ingress. Priced at £29.95, it comes with four language cards, with Spain expected to be the first to ban the use of safety triangles by 2026. Each banner has four extra suckers for greater adhesion, and an eco-friendly storage bag to avoid taking up space in your car. The banner is safer for drivers because they don't need to walk back to erect a triangle, and can be fitted to a vehicle in just 30 seconds. Be-Seen-Screen advises that buyers trial the device in their own driveways to become familiar with its operation. ***be-seen-screen.co.uk***

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2025 CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE;
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ALL PRICES ARE PER CAR i.e. 2 people sharing.

APRIL 6-9th COAST TO COAST (DEVON TO DEVON)
START ON THE SOUTH COAST NEAR WEYMOUTH. A DAY IN THE LOCAL AREA, THEN NEXT DAY RIGHT ACROSS EXMOOR TO THE NORTH COAST, POSSIBLY BARNSTAPLE. FINALLY ANOTHER DAY AROUND NORTH DEVON.
3 DAYS 4 NIGHTS AT 2 HOTELS. £1499

MAY 18-22nd LAKES AND BORDERS
START IN LAKES, ONE DAY AROUND NORTHERN LAKES AND EDEN VALLEY. POSSIBLY LUNCH ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS. NEXT DAY, NORTH PENNINES TO KELSO. FINAL DAY MORE BORDERS ROUTES. **4 DAYS 5 NIGHTS AT 3 HOTELS. £2499**

JUNE 15-18th BOWLAND AND BAY
3 NIGHTS AT GIBBON BRIDGE HOTEL. DAILY ROUTES INTO THE TROUGH OF BOWLAND AND SOUTHERN DALES/LANCASHIRE FELLS. FINAL DAY ACROSS LANCASHIRE FELLS TO DERBYSHIRE AND FINISH NEAR CHATSWORTH HOUSE. **3 DAYS 4 NIGHTS £1499**

AUGUST 17-27th THE ARDENNES AND EIFEL
ITINERARY STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION BUT WE HAVE RECCE-D MOST OF IT.
ENQUIRE FOR MORE DETAILS.

SEPTEMBER 13TH LITTLE DEVILS TOUR
ONE DAY IN SOUTH AND WEST DALES AND EDEN VALLEY. IN ASSOCIATION WITH KIRKBY LONSDALE MOTOR CLUB. PART OF THE HRCR SCENIC TOURS SERIES. **£70 NO ACCOMMODATION**

OCTOBER 5-8th THE DALES TO DURHAM
BASICALLY A RE-RUN OF THIS YEARS EVENT AS MOST OF IT WAS COVERED BY FOG. (DISCOUNT FOR THOSE WHO DID IT THIS YEAR). BUT A NEW START VENUE (YORK) AND FIRST DAY'S ROUTE. **£3 DAYS 4 NIGHTS 2 HOTELS. £1799**

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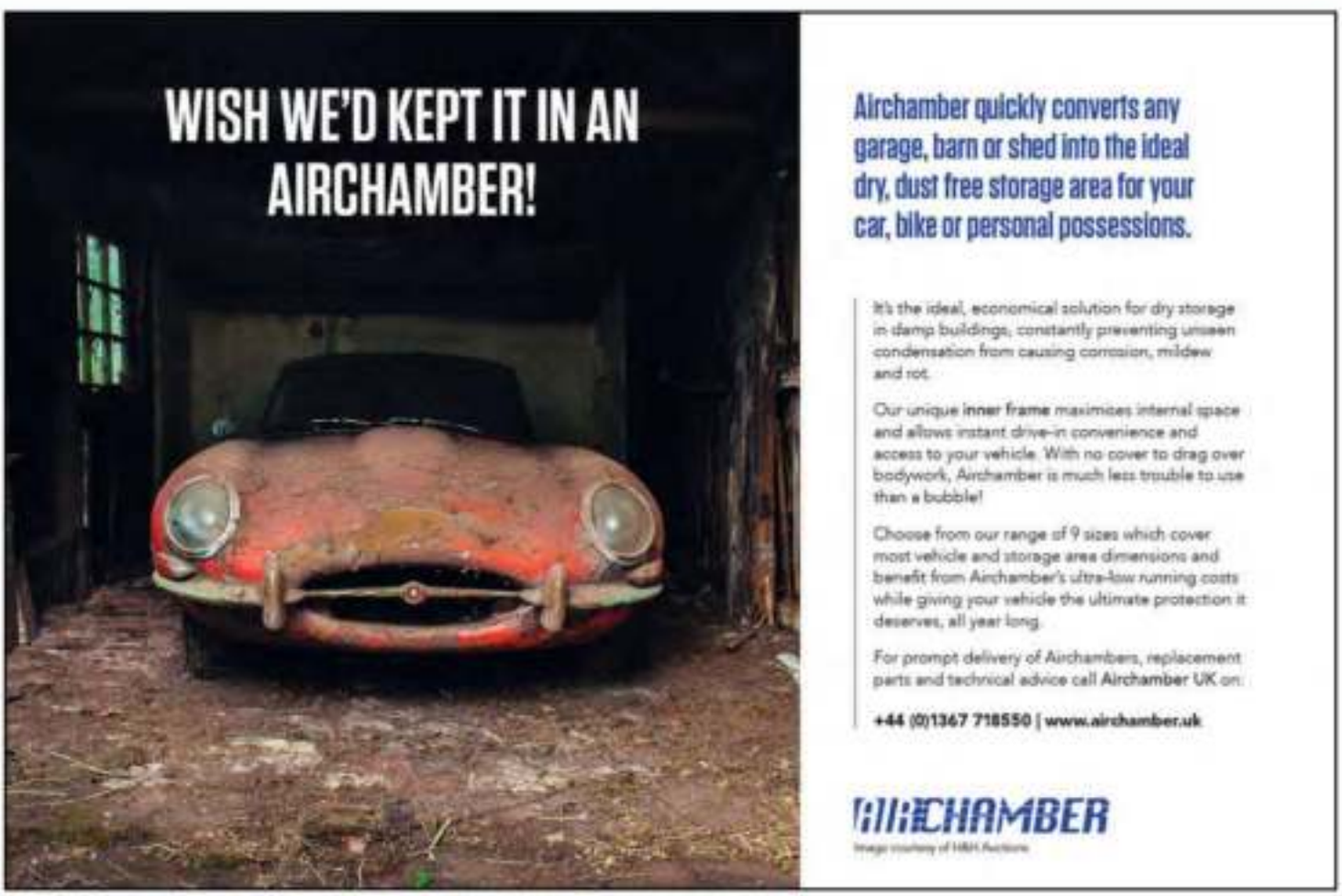
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PICK OF THE MONTH

Great classic cars, products and services from our partners

ADVERTISING FEATURE

2002 JAGUAR XJ EXECUTIVE

George Mackay Cars

George Mackay Cars, Edinburgh; 0131 447 6000; georgemackay.co.uk

This remarkably low-mileage V8-powered XJ (X308) was supplied new by Appleyard Jaguar in Edinburgh to a Colonel Thomson in June 2002. Ordered in Carnival Red with contrasting Oatmeal leather, it continued to be serviced by the supplying dealership. In 2013, it changed ownership to its second – and so far final – keeper, when it was purchased by world-famous *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* author Alexander McCall Smith. It has been used sparingly as his chauffeur-driven vehicle, and has covered a mere 16,000 miles from new. **£16,995**

Sensational Porsche 917 used for the filming of *Le Mans* should get buyers in a lather. Below right: significant Cobra 427

McQUEEN'S RACING STAR TO SELL

One of the three Porsche 917s featured in the 1970 film *Le Mans* will lead the line at the Mecum Auctions sale from 7-19 January in Kissimmee, Florida. Chassis 917-022 is reported to be the car wearing the number 20 in the film, finished in the iconic Gulf Oil livery and driven by hero Michael Delaney. He was played by Steve McQueen, who performed much of his own stunt driving in the car, which retains the camera mounts fitted for these sequences.

Despite a scene in the film where the car apparently crashed – actually a Lola T70 in disguise – the Porsche was sold to Reinhold Joest, who started the 917's racing career under his Team Auto Usdau Racing banner. Through 1971 it competed in a number of World Sportscar Championship races, including taking fourth at the Spa 1000km, as well as a stint with Jo Siffert who was second at the non-Championship Repubblica GP.

After its retirement from front-line racing, it was purchased by Porsche factory driver Brian Redman, then Richard Attwood in 1978 for use in historics, for which its livery was changed once again to a red-and-white scheme similar to the Salzburg 917K in which he won at Le Mans in 1970. In 1999 it passed to collector Frank Gallogly, before being sold by RM Sotheby's for a then model-record price of $1.32m. It was subsequently acquired by Porsche enthusiast and comedian Jerry Seinfeld.

A restoration was completed in August 2024, returning it to the original specification as seen in that Hollywood showing, in the famous blue-and-orange Gulf Oil colours. The work was led by Cavaglieri Restorations in Van Nuys, California, with input from other specialists including Ed Pink Racing Engines. This included the frame being pressure-tested, repaired and painted black.

Although Mecum Auctions has not given an estimate for the car, it is likely to at least match the current auction record for a 917, at $14,080,000. This was set by its on-screen support act, 917-024, at the Gooding & Company Pebble Beach sale in 2017. Its other co-star, 917-031, was offered by RM Sotheby's in 2021, but failed to sell on a $16-18.5m estimate. Film stars aside, the latter auction house did sell an ex-Kremer Racing 1981 917 earlier in 2024 in Monaco for €2,648,750.

Further headline lots in the huge Kissimmee sale include the 1965 Shelby 427 'Essex Wire Cobra', which enjoyed a prolific racing career in various events including the Sports Car Club of America A Production series. And, with another type of fame attached to it, the 1967 Jaguar E-type used in the three *Austin Powers* films will be offered at the same fixture.

HAMPSON LAUNCHES ONLINE SALES

Hampson Auctions has introduced its own online auction platform, adding to the firm's more traditional live sales, which will continue as before at Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire, and elsewhere.

Lots will be displayed for seven days on the website – hampsonauctions.com/marketplace – for a flat entry fee of £300 for cars, £200 for motorcycles and £100 for numberplates, plus a 7% buyer's fee; there are discounts available when multiple lots are entered. The fees include storage, professional photography and the writing of descriptions for the sales catalogue, as well as the lots being distributed among Hampson's channels on The Saleroom, Bid Spotter and i-Bidder.

Each sale will include a 1% donation to charity The Joshua Tree, which supports families affected by childhood cancers. Hampson Auctions managing director Zach Hamilton adds: "The Hampson ethos is that everything should be transparent – what you see is what you pay. And this includes the charitable element of Marketplace; we will present a running total of the funds raised for The Joshua Tree and give regular updates on what those funds have been spent on."

BMW collection sold in Munich on 23 November. Right: ex-Schumacher F1 Ferrari took sealed bids

GLOBAL AMBITIONS FOR RM SOTHEBY'S

RM Sotheby's hosted 14 live sales in 2024, including two in Dubai, Saudi Arabia, and debut events at Clivedon House, Berkshire, and Tegernsee, Germany, underlining an international expansion both in terms of venues and revenue for the auction house. Total sales of $925m and $811m in 2022 and 2023 respectively, each for around 1000 cars, suggest both a shift upmarket and global access to high-worth customers; in the four years after Sotheby's acquired a stake in RM Auctions in 2015, annual figures were generally c$500m from 3000 lots. It has been accompanied by a raft of new hires, including Sholto Gilbertson as director of sales UK, senior consultant Malcolm Barber and specialists in key emerging markets including Dubai.

"Collector-grade motor cars are now an integral part of our Luxury Division," said Daniel Asmar, Sotheby's MD for the Middle East and North Africa, ahead of the first Dubai sale in March 2024, which took nearly $17m as 16 of 22 cars sold. Part of the RM Sotheby's strategy in post-pandemic years has been to hold smaller 'boutique' sales, capitalising on the returning popularity of live auctions. "The increasing value of collector cars has no doubt fuelled an interest in auctions," says Duccio Lopresto, director of business development for the UK and Europe, adding: "the expected pivot to online-only sales never fully materialised."

The highly publicised sale of one of two Mercedes-Benz 300SLR Coupés for €135m (*Marketplace*, July 2022) proved a catalyst for high-profile single-car sales, and auctions of private garages have acted in the same way. "Single-owner collections have become an increasingly significant part of our business, and the Uhlenhaut sale has led to other opportunities such as the selection from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum in 2025," says Duccio.

However, while collector cars closely aligned with the luxury market have helped drive higher revenues, lower volumes threaten vulnerability to wider market conditions. In the first half of 2024, Sotheby's reported a 25% drop in total sales, with revenue down to $558m from $712m for the same period in '23; rival Christie's saw a 22% fall. In August, Sotheby's received a $1bn injection from shareholder ADQ, primarily to help pay off corporate debts inflamed by a high-interest-rate economy.

Meanwhile, the number of classic vehicles sold at auction has more than doubled since 2020, according to data aggregator Statista, with a full two thirds now accounted for by online sales.

LOTS TO WATCH

Holden Commodore SS
One of 750 homologation specials for Group A, this 1988 car is guided at NZ$240-260k for Webb's on 8 December.

Alfa Romeo 2000S
Up for grabs at Oldtimer Galerie's 29 December auction is this lovely 1959 Vignale Coupé, showing just 15,500km.

Bugatti Type 57C
RM Sotheby's will sell this ex-Petersen museum Atalante at its 24 January Scottsdale sale, estimated at $1.75-2.5m.

ADVERTS GET INTELLIGENT

Autotrader is rolling out a suite of tools for its users employing artificial intelligence, intended to streamline descriptions, photography selection and specifications on its classified advertisement listings. The first stage of Co-Driver has already been launched, which can categorise vehicle images and arrange them in the optimum order according to user data – putting the most attractive fruit at the front. It can also alert sellers to obvious gaps in their selection.

AI-generated descriptions will follow in early 2025, which are reported to benefit from access to factory specifications via vehicle identification numbers that Co-Driver will combine with the large stock of data already held by *Autotrader* on its platform. The format will also include an 'engagement-optimised' list of highlighted features for each car.

Autotrader intends to offer the full range of AI-assisted functions to all users, both private and trade, as part of its tiered packages.

AUCTION DIARY

DECEMBER

5-7 Mecum Auctions Kansas City, Missouri, USA *mecum.com*

7 Iconic Auctioneers Leamington Spa, Warwickshire *iconicauctioneers.com*

7 WB & Sons Newcastle upon Tyne *wbandsons.com*

7-8 Manor Park Classics Runcorn, Cheshire *manorparkclassics.com*

8 Webb's Auckland, New Zealand *webbs.co.nz*

10 Ewbank's Woking, Surrey *ewbankauctions.co.uk*

12 Bonhams|Cars London *bonhams.com*

14 Barons Southampton, Hampshire *barons-auctions.com*

29 Oldtimer Galerie Gstaad, Switzerland *oldtimergalerie.ch*

JANUARY

7-19 Mecum Auctions Kissimmee, FL, USA *mecum.com*

11 Barons Southampton, Hampshire *barons-auctions.com*

19-27 Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale, Arizona, USA *barrett-jackson.com*

24 Bonhams|Cars Scottsdale, Arizona, USA *bonhams.com*

24 RM Sotheby's Scottsdale, Arizona, USA *rmsothebys.com*

25-26 Anglia Car Auctions King's Lynn, Norfolk *angliacarauctions.co.uk*

30 SWVA Holton Heath, Dorset *swva.co.uk*

FEBRUARY

4-5 RM Sotheby's Paris, France *rmsothebys.com*

5-7 Mathewsons Online (UK) *mathewsons.co.uk*

6 Bonhams|Cars Paris, France *bonhams.com*

7 Artcurial Paris, France *artcurial.com*

8 Barons Southampton, Hampshire *barons-auctions.com*

15-16 Manor Park Classics Cheshire *manorparkclassics.com*

19-20 Brightwells Leominster, Herefordshire *brightwells.com*

22 Iconic Auctioneers Warks *iconicauctioneers.com*

Details correct at time of writing – please check that sales are on before visiting venues

Buckley's deals on wheels

I met up with my friend John in Devizes to inspect his latest purchase: a Paris-delivered, left-hooker '66 Rover P5 Coupé 3-litre manual-overdrive. The all-white livery is not the most flattering, but it is basically sound and looks great with yellow headlight bulbs.

John found the P5 online and bought it from a French Rover *collectionneur* who'd had the Coupé off the road for 10 years. The plan is to ship it to LA once it's up and running – maybe glaring white will work in California. Anyway, given that it currently doesn't start and has no brakes (or likely clutch hydraulics), I had to smile at John's enthusiasm for tackling the non-essential niceties: who needs brakes when you can ponder things such as fitting a badge bar and his trademark Webasto sunroof?

Looking at the engine, I was surprised to find the 'F-head' straight-six breathes through a single carburettor, but the build quality is second only to Rolls-Royce and easily matches anything German of the era. They are pretty sedate as autos, but with the manual gearbox the 121bhp, 110mph MkIII Coupé was as fast as a V8 P5B, in theory. I was reminded of the copy from an American Rover advert (or possibly a column in *Road & Track* or *Car and Driver*) about Richie Ginther driving a MkIII Coupé on the road, and how his fast but super-smooth technique allowed him to maintain momentum and swish past whole lines of slower cars: presumably Ginther's P5 Coupé connection was by way of his '63 Le Mans outing in the Rover Turbine with Graham Hill.

As a V8, the P5B Coupé is one of my favourite cars full-stop, and I have enjoyed the three or four I've owned very much. When I started driving you could buy a running 3.5 Litre saloon for £150, but Coupés always demanded a premium. I saw one in a restoration shop the other day, fresh from a £70,000 refurb: the feeling was that it would make that and maybe a lot more if it ever came up for sale. It was perfect.

Meanwhile, 'Rover John' was last seen driving away in his diesel-engined Rover Metro Cabriolet. He has a plan to corner the market in these cars, although his oil-burning example is home-grown and apparently unique: they never made a diesel cabriolet.

John will suffer anything to enjoy open-topped motoring while keeping the British end up – even the derision of the Wiltshire schoolboys who, on spotting the flowing golden locks of my friend driving down the High Street, made overtures to the effect that he was the reincarnation of a certain *Jim'll Fix It* host. John saw the funny side, although I think we can be fairly sure that Jimmy wouldn't have been seen behind the wheel of a Metro Cabriolet, dead or alive. But a Rover P5? Possibly: I know for sure that he owned a Humber Imperial.

LHD P5 looks the part, but needs attention before a new life in the USA

AUCTION RESULTS

October's top 50 worldwide sales

$9.35m Gullwing set a new auction record at RM Sotheby's Junkyard sale

€849k for Aguttes' Bugatti Type 30 GP

Last Spyker C8 built, €575k, Bonhams

PRICE	CAR	SALE
£7,203,350	1956 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing alloy body	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£3,599,750	2015 Ferrari LaFerrari	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£3,180,100	1935 Mercedes-Benz 500K Spezial Coupé 'Caracciola'	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£2,704,800	2010 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Stirling Moss	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£2,544,850	1939 Horch 855 Spezial Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£2,125,200	1956 Porsche 550RS Spyder	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£1,540,000	1984 Porsche 911SC/RS Gruppe B 'Evolutionsserie'	Broad Arrow Auctions, Chattanooga, USA
£1,443,750	1964 Iso Grifo A3/L Spider prototype	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£1,207,500	2011 Aston Martin One-77	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£1,020,250	1968 Lamborghini Miura	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£914,375	1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£893,200	1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster	Bonhams|Cars, Newport, USA
£893,200	1962 Porsche 356B 1600 'Twin-Grille' Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£744,975	1969 Lamborghini Miura S	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£713,351	1922 Bugatti Type 30 Grand Prix	Aguttes, Brussels, Belgium
£681,450	1959 Porsche 356A Carrera 1500 GS/GT Coupé	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£677,600	2019 Ford GT	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£627,900	2007 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren 722 Edition	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£601,370	1935 Auburn 851 Supercharged Speedster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£491,692	1929 Nacional Pescara 3 Litre Competition	Aguttes, Brussels, Belgium
£483,000	2014 Spyker C8	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£478,170	1963 Aston Martin DB4 Series V Vantage	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£469,700	1967 Lamborghini Miura	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£456,995	2006 Ford GT Heritage Edition	Broad Arrow Auctions, Chattanooga, USA
£454,020	2007 Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG Cabriolet	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£444,360	1989 Lamborghini Countach 25th Anniversary	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£440,440	1902 Packard Model G Rear Entrance Tonneau	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£440,440	1932 Chrysler CL Imperial Convertible Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£405,720	2008 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Crown Edition	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£401,940	1938 Maybach SW-38 Sport Cabriolet	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£389,620	1971 Ferrari 365GTB/4 Daytona	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£385,000	1931 Mercedes-Benz 370S Mannheim Sport Cabriolet	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£362,250	1966 Lamborghini 400GT 'Interim'	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£355,740	1969 Ford Mustang Boss 429	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£355,355	1971 NSU Ro80 2 Porte +2 by Pininfarina	RM Sotheby's, Los Angeles, USA
£351,120	1997 Porsche 911 (993) turbo S	Broad Arrow Auctions, Chattanooga, USA
£347,270	1968 Ford Mustang Eleanor Tribute Edition	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£338,800	1931 Chrysler CG Imperial Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£338,100	1974 BMW 3.0 CSL Batmobile	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£328,440	1954 Bentley R-type Continental	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£328,440	2010 Porsche 911 (997) GT2 RS	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£326,095	2006 Ford GT	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£313,390	1911 Oldsmobile Autocrat Model 28 Roadster	RM Sotheby's, Hershey, USA
£309,120	2008 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium
£308,770	1998 Porsche 911 (993) Carrera S Cabriolet	Broad Arrow Auctions, Chattanooga, USA
£304,920	2016 Shelby GT40 MkII 50th Anniversary	Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, USA
£304,760	1959 Fiat-Osca 1500 Aerodynamica Berlinetta	Bonhams|Cars, Newport, USA
£300,960	1970 Chevrolet Chevelle LS6 Convertible	Mecum Auctions, Indianapolis, USA
£300,300	2019 Porsche 911 (991) Speedster Heritage Design Package	Broad Arrow Auctions, Chattanooga, USA
£299,460	1967 Maserati Mistral Spyder 4000	Bonhams|Cars, Knokke-Heist, Belgium

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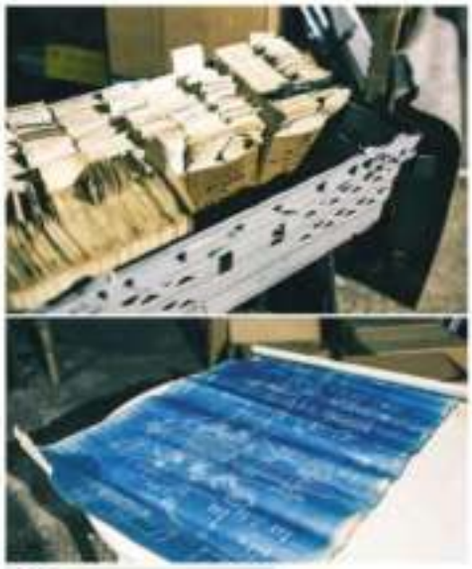
ASOC's new spares facility has been a labour of love for club members. Green racking came as part of the parts cache rescued from Rolls-Royce back in 1972

Inventory includes everything from large castings and bodywork to shelf upon shelf of smaller components



The Armstrong Siddeley Heritage Trust archive lives on site, in climate-controlled storage to preserve the documentation

From left: chairman Keith Dewhurst, stores manager Robert Pinner and Sam Owen

SIDDELEY SAVIOUR CLUBS TOGETHER

The Armstrong Siddeley Owners' Club's vast spares centre is up and running at its new Wiltshire base

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JACK HARRISON**

The Armstrong Siddeley Owners' Club, a not-for-profit limited company, has been supplying parts for more than 50 years. That's longer than Armstrong Siddeley existed as a car maker before falling victim to the jet age in 1960: as part of the Bristol Siddeley group, Armstrong Siddeley designed the Olympus engines that powered the Vulcan and Concorde.

The club's spares store near Shrewsbury is now open five days a week, following a gargantuan rebuild, and it's busy with enquiries from all around the world: the Thai royal family still runs Armstrong Siddeleys, and the ASOC works closely with its Australian counterpart.

No other small club does spares on this scale. Many parts cross over with other British cars such as Alvis, Daimler, Bristol and Rolls-Royce; Humber supplied Armstrong with gearboxes – plenty are available should you need one.

There are hundreds of boxes of small parts, and service items such as brake shoes are – not surprisingly – among the faster-moving items. These are joined by racks of new-old-stock and used panels for later cars, along with clutches, power-steering pumps and radiators. There are some remanufactured items, too, such as wheel cylinders and road springs, but the more instantly recognisable parts include head gaskets, water-pump bodies and rows of new bumpers, windscreens and glass for pre- and post-war models.

The ASOC is proactive considering Armstrong cars haven't been made for more than six decades. The club is keen to get younger people interested, too, and has just provided a post-war Whitley saloon to a 30-year-old for a year, as part of the Classic Car Loan Project. Plus, it co-operates with the various Daimler, Alvis and Bristol clubs to pool resources.

The site also houses the Armstrong Siddeley Heritage Trust, with a temperature-controlled room for the fascinating factory archive. When the company stopped making the Star Sapphire in 1960, it pledged to produce spares for all models for the following 10 years. The ASOC was formed in '62, and raised the money to buy the spares from Rolls-Royce in '72 in the wake of its bankruptcy. The cache included the original green factory shelving and the rights to the name in as far as it related to motor cars.

The haul was moved from the Parkside plant to a farm near Bradford-on-Avon, to be housed in a barn and two ex-Canadian Air Force Nissen huts. This location was rented until 2020, when the landlord decided he wanted to build houses on the plot. "He wanted us out immediately," says club chairman Keith Dewhurst, "but we negotiated for the time to relocate. We soon realised we needed a low-cost area that was more central. With so many slow-moving parts, it had to be an affordable means of storage. We may only sell one of any given item every five or 10 years. Buyers are often amazed we have them, even for pre-war models."

Transporting the many components from the rather inaccessible farm took a huge amount of work: 10 14-hour days of packing, then months of sorting and filing everything on the computer system at the other end.

"Every piece of stock had to be looked at, and some of them even had to be scrapped, such as the 234 inlet manifolds," continues Keith. "We had 400 of them, but they never wear out so we earned quite a lot of money back out of scrap."

It cost the ASOC a fortune to do all this. "The club had decent reserves, but some members have been very generous," says Keith. "We are now trading in profit after two years at a loss. We have 650 members, and the spare-parts operation helps to keep us alive."

The knowledge

Name Armstrong Siddeley Owners' Club Ltd
Address Unit 1, Pentre Industrial Estate, Pentre, Shrewsbury SY4 1BP
Specialism Armstrong Siddeley spares, for all models
Staff Two **Prices** 16/18hp exhaust £462, 234/6 clutch slave cylinder £40.98
Tel 07542 685591
Web stores.siddeley.org

ASTON MARTIN V12 VANQUISH

Aston's first new-generation, practical supercar is currently great value as it acquires classic status

WORDS **MALCOLM McKAY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES MANN**

After Walter Hayes' DB7 saved Aston Martin, it was vital that the next model, under the leadership of Ulrich Bez, showcased cutting-edge technology beyond the DB7's XJS-derived chassis. The V12 Vanquish did exactly that, with a carbonfibre backbone and A-pillars supporting a bonded and riveted aluminium structure and body. Suspension wishbones in machined aluminium, an uprated Vantage V12 engine, an automated-manual Tremec gearbox and a limited-slip diff completed the spec.

'Probably the best GT in the world [and] the best-handling Aston ever,' *Autocar* enthused. It had an impressive ride, too. Weight helped: a couple of passengers would tip it over two tons.

The Jaguar XJ-derived centre console was criticised, as were rear seats judged not fit for human occupation: keeping them unticked from the options list saved £6000. Fuel economy when driven enthusiastically also limited what was otherwise a great long-distance cruiser.

The V12 Vanquish S was launched in 2004, to further acclaim. The most important change was a more bespoke interior, along with a power boost from new injectors, a revised ECU and cylinder heads, plus forged conrods. Firmer suspension with a 5mm lower ride height, an improved gearbox, lower gearing and more powerful front brakes were also introduced.

It's easy to be put off a Vanquish by the huge bills owners have faced for subframes, 'boxes and other issues. Today, though, the Vanquish is blessed with a dedicated specialist, David Such at v12vanquish.com, who is developing cost-effective remedies to all of its problems.

The paddle-shift gearbox was widely enjoyed at the time, but now it's the least-favoured feature and many have been converted to full manual transmissions, led by Aston Martin Works. It's not a particularly cheap conversion, and rebuilding the semi-auto is less expensive, using upgraded pneumatic actuators.

Despite its mostly aluminium construction, steel and electrolytic corrosion are becoming common. The steel front subframes rust (and sometimes the rear), but so do their mounting points as well as parts such as the undertray and wheelarch-liner mounts, where the two metals meet. Specialists can replace these with stainless-steel fixings and bond in new aluminium sections if needed.

TROUBLE SPOTS

CORROSION Front subframe, especially behind undertray; rear subframe and anti-roll bar; wheelarch-liner brackets; all steel mountings in the aluminium shell (and surrounding aluminium, especially the rear wheelarches); steel coolant pipes

TRANSMISSION Check it works efficiently and isn't locking in first or dropping into neutral. Has the oil been changed?

ENGINE Watch for coolant leaks, 'check engine' warning light, deteriorating vacuum pipes and PCV valves; check fuel pump; look for oil leaks around cam covers, front covers, sump; ECUs can be fried by jump-starting

BRAKES Check that they aren't juddering or binding; abused discs can distort and delaminate. Upgrades are common

SUSPENSION Rubber bushes and shock absorbers are heavily loaded so wear quickly

TYRES Should be the correct Yokohamas: original rear compound is unique to Aston

'Purposeful yet graceful, compact yet massively imposing' is how *Autocar* described Ian Callum's styling for the Vanquish

The exceptionally rigid bodyshell – plus plenty of weight – allowed Aston to achieve a blend of superb handling and exceptional ride comfort. If it doesn't feel sharp and unruffled, it's likely the suspension bushes and shock absorbers will need replacing. The interior received a further upgrade with bespoke switchgear on the Vanquish S

The V12 boasts a fabulous soundtrack and easily tops 150,000 miles, given proper maintenance. Use an OBDII reader to identify codes if the 'check engine' light is on: misfire errors often result from oil leaks caused by failed PCV valves in the vacuum system or leaking seals around the spark plugs, but rarely from failed coils or plugs

The front subframe rots out, especially the rear legs hidden by the undertray: remove it for inspection. Check for corroded subframe mounts in the body

Aston published a guide to driving with the paddle-shift; check the 'box works correctly and doesn't drop into neutral when driving. The system can be rebuilt

Check the interior has been well looked after and all the electrical equipment works as it should. This car is fitted with the optional Zagato trim package

The brakes lead a hard life, so inspect for distortion. Check wheelarch-liner mounts haven't corroded through the bodyshell – holes are not unknown

The Vanquish was hailed as the best-handling Aston yet when new, but it's a heavy car so worn suspension mounts and bushes take the edge off

Before you buy

Complex modern classics need to be used, otherwise electronic contacts will deteriorate even if the car is stored correctly. ECUs get fried by jump-starting and must be rebuilt: they are no longer available new. Don't be afraid of higher-mileage cars with full service histories.

A well-maintained V12 should give long service; issues are generally minor if swiftly addressed. Problem areas include oil leaks on to sensors, squeaks from worn auxiliary idlers, and coolant leaks from the front water manifold and thermostat-housing pipes.

The gearbox (and power steering) benefit from fluid changes, despite not being on the service schedule. Expect to pay £5000-plus for a gearbox rebuild and £2000-plus for front subframe replacement – both can easily run up if other work is considered necessary at the same time. Front subframe corrosion has been an issue for years; rear subframes and anti-roll bars are also now suffering from rust, as are their mounting points in the aluminium shell.

The brakes are adequate for normal use, but suffer on track days or Alpine passes. Check for juddering from distorted or delaminating discs. Vanquish S front brakes are better, but still suffer with harder use. AP Racing upgrades can be used on both models.

Rattles and clonks from the suspension, along with a loss of poise, are a sure sign that rubber bushes, mountings and gaiters have deteriorated; they lead a hard life, so budget for their replacement if needed.

OWNING ONE

"In 2009 I went to see a DB7," recalls **Steve Berry**. "I didn't like the details, but I saw this Vanquish and loved it. It's chassis 61 and was specified by former Aston chairman David Richards, including the part-suede Zagato interior. It's not my favourite Aston – that's my V8 Oscar India – but it was my daily driver and is now approaching 50,000 miles. It is very usable – in a sense the first 'proper' car Aston ever made – and it looks great. Ian Callum only really had one sports-car shape, but this is the ultimate expression of that. It's had to have a new subframe – Bamford Rose charged me £5000 for that – and it's also received a new exhaust. I was advised to get a new clutch at the same time, because if not it would all have to be removed again if it ever needed doing. Unfortunately, the new exhaust is an inch longer and I burned my leg on it badly. I've probably spent £30,000 on it in 10 years."

"It's very usable, and is the ultimate expression of Ian Callum's great sports-car shape"

ALTERNATIVES

FERRARI 575M *2002-'06, 2056 built*
The 550 Maranello was the ultimate GT supercar until the Vanquish eased ahead. Ferrari fought back with the 575, which had more power and manual or automated-manual transmissions. **Price now** £75-140k

LAMBORGHINI MURCIÉLAGO
2001-'10, 4099 built
All-wheel drive and mid-engined, the scissor-doored Lambo gave more drama and slightly more performance, but was less usable than the Vanquish. **Price now** £100-250k

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THE KNOWLEDGE

TIMELINE

1998 Project Vantage concept unveiled
2001 Vanquish launch at Geneva Salon
2002 The model stars in *Die Another Day*
2003 Sports Dynamic Package option
2004 Vanquish S added: new interior, front splitter, 520bhp, lower and stiffer. Zagato Roadster and Bertone Jet2 displayed at Geneva, one of each built
2005 S model only in production
2007 Final 50 built as Ultimate Editions in Ultimate Black, with upgraded interior (20 RHD, three in white for the Gulf states)

FACTFILE

Sold/number built 2001-'07/1492 Vanquish, 1086 S **Construction** aluminium composite chassis, carbonfibre backbone and A-posts, aluminium body
Engine all-alloy, dohc-per-bank, 48v 5935cc V12, sequential fuel injection
Max power 460bhp @ 6500rpm to 520bhp @ 7000rpm **Max torque** 400lb ft @ 5000rpm to 425lb ft @ 5800rpm
Transmission six-speed automated manual, RWD via LSD **Suspension** double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar f/r **Steering** power-assisted rack and pinion **Brakes** 14in (356mm) front, 13in (330mm) rear vented and drilled discs, with servo and ABS; 15in (380mm) front discs on S
Length 15ft 3½in (4665mm) **Width** 6ft 6½in (1998mm) **Height** 4ft 4in (1318mm)
Wheelbase 8ft 10in (2690mm)
Weight 4037lb (1835kg) [S 4132lb (1878kg)]
0-60mph 4.2 secs **Top speed** 196mph (200mph-plus, S) **Mpg** 10-20
Price new £163,600-174,000 (2005)

CLUBS

Aston Martin Owners' Club
01865 400400; amoc.org

SPECIALISTS

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RS Williams www.rswilliams.co.uk **Martin's Aston Services** martinsastonservices.co.uk

WHAT TO PAY

	Resto/Average/Show
Vanquish	£25,000/35k/60k
Vanquish S	£30,000/45k/90k
Ultimate Edition	£60,000/90k/140k

OUR VERDICT

The Vanquish is spectacular to look at and to drive, plus it now represents exceptional value for money compared with its Italian contemporaries: this Aston Martin is sure to increase in value as it passes into classic status. Choose a well-maintained example that has been driven regularly and then keep on top of the common issues with the help of dedicated specialists. The Vanquish today still looks like a surprisingly affordable and perfectly usable modern-classic supercar.

FOR
With so many components coming from the Ford parts bin and with cheaper modern solutions to electronic issues, the Vanquish is not as terrifyingly expensive to own as it was

AGAINST
The huge complexity of a 20-25-year-old supercar means there is a lot to go wrong, with Aston Martin diagnostics equipment needed to reprogramme components

CAUGHT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

Tempted? Here are two examples available to buy now

ASTON MARTIN V12 VANQUISH

Year 2003 **Recorded mileage** 36,600
Price £49,950 **Vendor** Runnymede Motor Co; 01753 644599; runnymedemotorcompany.com
For Bond style; originality; sensibly priced
Against Early dashboard

Finished in the same Tungsten Silver as James Bond's Vanquish in *Die Another Day*, this early 2+2 has immediate appeal. Pale grey hide helps brighten the interior and it has had just two owners. Its most recent has had the car since 2008 and made regular visits to main dealers and specialists. Every invoice is documented in the history file and it reportedly drives without fault. It even comes with its original battery conditioner, complete with box.

ASTON MARTIN V12 VANQUISH S

Year 2005 **Recorded mileage** 18,118
Price £115,000 **Vendor** Nicholas Mee, Hatfield, Hertfordshire; 020 8741 8822; nicholasmee.co.uk
For Manual gearbox conversion; as-new condition
Against At the top of the market

A manual gearbox answers sceptics of the standard paddle-shift: only around 100 cars were converted by Aston Martin Works, this one in 2009. Finished in Titanium Silver, it is very nicely appointed with colour-coded doorhandles and quilted headlining, all of which appears box-fresh with so few miles. Its three past owners have added three Works service stamps and more with other specialists; Nicholas Mee will add another before sale.

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1995 Ferrari 456 GT
One of five

This beautiful example is finished in the classic Ferrari red (Rosso Corsa) with black hide and carpets. It is one of just five remaining 456 GTs in this color from the 141 officially imported by Maranello Concessionaires/Ferrari UK, of which 103 remain taxed/SORN'd. A pre-airbag example with the desirable three-spoke steering wheel, it has covered a mere 27,600 miles from new, fully supported by its original service book and past invoices. Lightly used since last supplied by us in 2017.

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Classified pick

Our favourite cars you can buy this month

AUSTIN-HEALEY 100

Year of manufacture 1956 **Recorded mileage** 42,598
Asking price £85,000 **Vendor** Rawles Motorsport, Upper Froyle, Alton, Hampshire; 01420 23212; rawlesmotorsport.co.uk

WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £1063 **Max power** 94bhp **Max torque** 144lb ft
0-60mph 10.3 secs **Top speed** 111mph **Mpg** 23

Art editor Cogman and I have a difference of opinion. He loves a restomod – any restomod – whereas I'm a bit less keen. I'm not an originality freak, far from it, but don't really understand the appeal of a classic whose looks and character have been modified out of all recognition.

So I realise I'm opening myself up to accusations of hypocrisy with this month's pick, yet for me this is the perfect kind of restomod. All of the ingredients that make the Big Healey such an appetising recipe remain, just with a large dose of added spice.

I've always preferred Healey 100s to the six-cylinder 100/6s and 3000s, and it appears I'm not alone because the four-pot cars have been performing best for vendor Rawles so far this year. I love the way they blend torquey muscle with surprising delicacy and that uniquely '50s handling. This example simply turns all of that up to 11, with a spec Rawles calls 'far in excess of 100M', and the additional reassurance of a new chassis and a full body restoration.

The most exciting element of this particular car is not the 'resto' bit, but the 'mod': it has the correct Austin big 'four' still, yet rebuilt by renowned Healey fettler Denis Welch Motorsport to produce a tasty 145bhp. All that power is delivered to the road via a racy straight-cut gearbox and limited-slip differential, while concessions to modern usability include an alternator, an electric fan and a baffled fuel tank – to keep things settled when you're enjoying its extra performance on a Goodwood track day, perhaps.

If you do take to the circuit, you'll likely appreciate the lowered, uprated suspension, plus the faster-ratio steering box, disc front brakes and wider Michelin XAS tyres – though I think I'd miss a standard 100's joyous tendency to want to slide at the slightest provocation, particularly on crossplies. And if history and provenance remain important to you, it's nice to know that this is one of just 165 UK right-hooker 'BN2' Healeys built, as confirmed by its British Motor Heritage certificate and a large history file.

To top it all off is that deep green debumpered coachwork set off by my absolute favourite, black wires. With the 'screen folded and a cheeky side-exit exhaust it looks almost impossibly rakish. It's just begging to be taken on a weekend thrash along a favourite country road with no particular place to go, the blat of that uprated motor overlaid with the whine of straight-cut gears.

SUMMARY

CHOSEN BY Alastair Clements
FOR More modern performance, without losing its classic appeal; fully restored, too
AGAINST Not one for the purist
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
Because you just know it's going to be brilliant fun to drive. Naughty, but nice

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1934 AUSTIN SEVEN TOURER fantastic paperwork & history & file, owned by Dr Evans for 23 years **£7995**

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1979 Porsche 911 SC 1 owner, 72,000 miles, LHD, full service history. Finishrd in grad prix white with full black leather. £64,995

MGB Roadster Only 7150 miles and 2 owners from new in 43 years. Finished in The Limited Bronze Metallic with distinguishing livery, Plus the very retro interior trim **£23,995**

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1935 Bentley 3.5 Litre 2 Door Fixed Head Coupe by Gurney Nutting, Subject to a £300,000. restoration. Exquisite.

1973 Bentley Corniche FHC, 1 of approximately 4 built that year of a total production of 63. Finished in Highland Green with Green leather. One of the rarest and fastest appreciating Bentley 2 door Classics, whilst remaining a completely usable and practical touring companion.

1951 Bentley Mk VI Mulliner "Lightweight" Saloon. Only 41 of these aluminium 'Lightweight' Saloons were produced by H.J. Mulliner between 1951 and 1953. Powered by Bentley's Big Bore 4.5L straight-six engine, B140MD, was exhibited at the 1951 Geneva Motor Show.

1938 Alvis 4.3-litre Short Chassis Concealed Hood Drophead Coupe by Whittingham and Mitchel, One of only 5 drop head coupes produced on the 4.3 short chassis, this Alvis 4.3-Litre carries unique drophead coupé coachwork by Whittingham & Mitchel. A wonderful opportunity to acquire one of the fastest production cars of its era and the very embodiment of the term, 'Post-Vintage Thoroughbred'.

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1980 MGB LE. Roadster Ltd Edition. Number 200 of only 420 Built Totally original and unrestored with only 25000 from new. A rare find. **£22950.**

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1960 Austin Healey Sprite MK 1. Frogeye. Iris blue with blue trim, hood, and tonneau. Wire wheels, uprated front disc Brakes and uprated unleaded engine, heritage certificate. Original RHD UK example and the subject of a ground up full nut and bolt tool room Concours restoration. **One of the finest in existence, £26,950**

2000 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Auto. Aston Martin racing green with green and fawn leather, alloys, sport's exhaust usual high spec etc, two owners and 38000 miles only, with full AM service history, beautiful original mint example one of the finest available. **£29,950**

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2008 Porsche 997 Carrera 2S cabriolet. With sports Tiptronic auto. Alloys, sports exhaust CD. Power Hood, plus superb factory spec. Black with Black full leather trim and red calipers, Stunning showroom condition example done 44000 miles from new with FPSH, all books & tools, keys and documentation.12 months full warranty included. **Any inspection is welcome, £34,950**

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1991 Daimler Double Six Series 3, Glacier white with warm charcoal leather, XJ Sport alloys, Aircond, electric sunroof, seats, mirrors, etc, 51000 miles only, A time warp mint and rust free example. With full documented jaguar History and heritage certificate. Stunning and rare like this. **£19950.**

1974 Rover P6 2200 SC. Auto. Mexican Brown with linen cloth trim, RHD matching number car, 49000 miles. Completely rust free show winning example. From our own private collection. Probably the finest on the market, all books, tools, truly magnificent. **£16,950.**

2016 Built Westfield X1 Lotus eleven replica. The subject of a Book written about the entire building by its first owner. British Racing Green with Red Trim, 1330 cc MG BMC engine developed from a 1275cc unit and uprated to 130BHP with a 5-speed Ford close-ratio gearbox. Having Covered a genuine 1300 miles from a build and as new throughout. Please contact us for full specifications etc. Truly stunning, **£24,950**

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1989 Mercedes 300SL R107. Nautic Blue with Grey leather trim. Blue hood and blue Hard Top. Alloys,ABS, Cruise, CD. One owner from new until 2023. The in our collection. 35000 miles Only and serviced by Mercedes Benz all its life. Mint original and unmarked. We think the best you will find **£59,950**

1995 Jaguar XJR Supercharged Auto. Rosé Bronze with Charcoal leather. Completely rust free and original, low mileage Mint example, The Best we have seen since they were new ! **£24950.**

2005 Bentley Continental GT. Finished in dark emerald with beige and green leather, stunning original example, two previous owners, 80000 miles with FSH (Bentley & VW main agent from new)All books, tools, documentation MOTs etc. **This beautiful example is not to be confused with the normal Tatt/Auction fodder... £22,950, Warranty**

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Classified pick

Our favourite cars you can buy this month

BMW Z3 COUPÉ 2.8i

Year of manufacture 1999 **Recorded mileage** 44,154km
Asking price £26,995 **Vendor** European Classic Cars, Swindon, Wiltshire; 01672 512879; europeanclassiccars.co.uk

WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price n/a **Max power** 190bhp **Max torque** 206lb ft
0-60mph 6.8 secs **Top speed** 144mph **Mpg** 30

Built to solve the scuttle shake that dogged the otherwise brilliant Z3M, the Coupé version has since become the most collectible and by far the most valuable version of BMW's '90s sports car. However, Z3 Coupés were also built in a more 'normal' non-M spec, though these never came to the UK. This left-hand-drive 2.8i, originally from Germany, is one of those cars – and, to my mind, represents peak Z3.

Though not a true 'skunkworks' model, the M Coupé was nonetheless produced by BMW's engineers in spite of the board, not at its direction. The result was an order to share as many parts as possible with the roadster, including its windscreen and doors – hence the Coupé's odd 'clown shoe' appearance. The suits weren't convinced on the business case for such a model, and were largely proved right. To gain extra volume, the Coupé was also fitted with the standard 2.8 (later 3.0) 'six' in LHD markets. Britain and other right-hooker markets could only get their Z3s with a lid in M form.

As a killjoy who dislikes convertibles, I've always liked Z3 Coupés and sampling Z3s in everything from four-cylinder to M form has only cemented that in my mind. 'If only the chassis was a bit stiffer,' is always my parting thought. This Coupé has that, but also maintains the softer springs and smaller wheels of an ordinary Z3, which far better suit British roads.

In non-M spec, the Z3 Coupé becomes a brilliant mini-GT hatchback – and all the car someone without kids could ever want. Comfortable, with enough space to transport a large suitcase in the back and half-decent fuel economy, but with the sense of fun you can only get in a car this compact. That makes it worth the sacrifice of left-hand drive in my book – and if you're using it properly, you'll be driving around Europe at every opportunity anyway.

The owner of this car must have come to the same conclusion as me, because it's a one-owner car, still with the buyer who ordered it new in Germany and brought it with them to the UK in 2006. Its headlamps were swapped for RHD units on arrival, though the originals come with the car. It has led a pampered life, covering just 44,154km (27,436 miles) and comes with all of its paperwork, including original German sales receipts and a full service history. And the best bit is that you can get this collector-quality example for the price of a high-mileage or slightly scruffy M Coupé.

SUMMARY

CHOSEN BY Charlie Calderwood
FOR Rare and appealing niche variant of the Z3
AGAINST LHD; a high-mileage M Coupé isn't much dearer
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
If you want an unusual, sporty yet comfortable mini GT that BMW didn't want you to have

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1959 Austin Healey 3000 Mk1

full weather gear, overdrive, restored, well cared for, superb **£42,995**

1979 Lotus Elite 504

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1974 Lancia Fulvia Monte Carlo

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1976 Porsche 911 2.7

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1989/F Very rare MG Metro 1275cc in remarkable condition. Advertising on behalf of the second owner who says:- This MG Metro was bought new by a lady in 1989 who used it until the early 2000s which is when it was then garaged until 2021. I bought the car out of said garage and spent some time recommissioning it including having all of the Hydro suspension replaced (an expensive but necessary job), new battery, rear swing arm, tyres and other bits and pieces. The car is very original with a lovely condition interior as you can see in the pictures.

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JENSEN INTERCEPTOR Mk1

Year of manufacture 1968 **Recorded mileage** 13,361
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WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £5198 **Max power** 330bhp **Max torque** 425lb ft
0-60mph 6.4 secs **Top speed** 137mph **Mpg** 12

It is no secret that I am a fan of an American V8. When one is combined with handsome, Touring-penned lines, the genetically international – but still, somehow, all West Bromwich – Jensen Interceptor makes for a tantalising prospect. And this example appears to be better than most.

'Probably the lowest-mileage Interceptor currently available for sale and can only be truly appreciated by viewing,' were some of the words on vendor Howard Wise Cars' website that drew me in. I had to find out more. How few miles? Just 13,361 in more than half a century, since it was supplied new by Charles Follet – as is still inscribed on this car's sill plate. In that time it's had just three custodians, the latest a collector who acquired it back in 1996 and has cocooned it in dry storage ever since. The Jensen's original green logbook shows its first keeper got it in September 1968, with its second owner's tenure running from December 1976 until its most recent change of hands 18 years ago. As you might expect, a car such as this is never a quick fling, more a considered purchase and a long-term love.

Other than its sub-15,000-mile total, what sets this Interceptor apart is its authenticity. "It is unrestored and totally original," Howard tells us, "even down to the exhaust manifolds – they still show their factory colour from new." It's never been welded, wears all the same panels it had when it left the works and the vendor believes about 90% of its original paint remains, too.

I'm rather taken by that California Sage Metallic finish. Open a door and the black-leather-trimmed cabin appears inviting, the famously curved (and rather wonderful) rear 'screen letting light pour in. If we are being picky, the driver's seat looks as if it's had – as you might expect – a touch more use than the others, but from the busy, glossy, wood-trimmed centre console to the large, three-spoke steering wheel, it is ready to be enjoyed.

And if you were the next lucky owner, that's just what you would do, right? This is one of just 1024 Mk1 Interceptors and its all-iron, 6276cc Chrysler V8 – with a deliciously walloping 425lb ft of torque, and mated to an automatic gearbox – is just waiting to waft you along, soaking up the miles effortlessly, albeit with quite a keen appetite for petrol. But if you have the six-figure sum required to make this classic yours, you can probably also afford its low two-figure thirst. It is sure to make someone very happy.

SUMMARY

CHOSEN BY Lizzie Pope
FOR Low miles; superb, original condition; 6.3-litre V8
AGAINST Catastrophic fuel economy
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
How many timewarp Mk1 Interceptors are still out there? And surely few are as good as this

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2014 Audi R8 Quattro 5.2 V10 S-A. Daytona Grey, 28000 miles, FSH. **£57,950**

1964 Austin Healey 3000 Mk3 BJ8 Phase 2. Colorado Red, Black hide, O/D, UK RHD, concours. **£67,500**

1970 Triumph TR6 150 BHP. BRG, Beige leather. Overdrive. Restored. **£18,950**

2003 Porsche 996 Turbo Cabriolet X50 (450 BHP). Black,Black hide,69,000 miles, FSH **£36,950**

2009 Mazda MX5 2.0i. Galaxy Grey, Black hide, 6-speed, 75000 miles. FSH. **£ 5,950**

2000 Rover Mini Cooper MPi. Tudor Red, Black leather, 84,000 miles, FSH, Stunning. **£15,950**

2006 Maserati 4200 Coupe Cambiocorsa. Mediterranean Blue, 55000 miles, FSH. **£12,950**

1992 BMW E30 318i Convertible Auto. Alpine White, new power hood, 58,000 miles, FSH. Mint ! **£10,950**

1978 TVR Taimar Turbo. Metallic Blue, Black trim. Concours restoration. **£ 35,950**

2000 BMW Z3 2.8i Roadster. Topaz Blue, Blue hide, 5-speed, 79,600 miles, FSH. Lovely. **£5,950**

1996 Volkswagen Golf VR6 5 Door. Candy White, rare auto with e-sunroof. 68,000 miles, FSH **£5,750**

1998 Mercedes SLK230 Mk1. Obsidian Black, Quartz hide,79,000 miles. FSH. **£3,950**

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1969 LOTUS ELAN S4 *ONLY 27,700 MILES* This rare Elan is one of a limited number of Lotus cars badged black. The cars had black badges and a steering wheel bearing Colin Chapman's signature. An incredible one owner car which has covered only 27,000 miles after being on the road until 1991. Now fully restored including engine rebuild, new clutch, bare shell repainted in its original French Blue, refurbished wheels, new tyres, suspension stripped and rebuilt, new shock absorbers etc. The interior is totally original. Comes with original handbooks, service book, MOTs up to 1991 and one carried out October 24. Unique opportunity to acquire a genuine one owner low mileage Elan. **£51,995**

2014 JAGUAR XK X150 XKR. Finished in stunning Ultimate Black with Ivory Hide seats Black Leather dash top and centre console with Ivory Stitching. This very high spec luxury model comes with Full Jaguar Main Dealer Service History with its last service by Jaguar Newcastle only 100+ miles ago. Has been kept in a heated garage under a cover. Supplied with its original book pack, jaguar online history and 2 sets of keys. Immaculate condition, these last of the line XKRs are becoming very sought after and would make a very sound investment. **£42,995**

1952 DAIMLER SPECIAL SPORTS CONVERTIBLE DB18 *ULEZ EXEMPT* Coach built by Barker one of only 500 built, 3 were fixed head and the rest drop heads mainly by Barker, there were a few Hooper bodies. Comes with an extensive history file including the original log book detailing the ownership including a short time with Gold Coast Studios in Fort Lauderdale USA for approximately 3 years then it came back to the UK. MOT details from 1968 through to 2018, with original handbooks, Jack and Tools, spare keys etc. Finished in immaculate Sage Green over Smoke Green with Beige tan hide, Beige carpets, wooden trim and rear bench seat. Becoming increasingly rare to find. **£32,995**

2018 MERCEDES AMG SLC 43 AUTO CONVERTIBLE Finished in immaculate Metallic Black with Black Nappa leather stitched red and red seat belts. This stunning example has a 3.0 litre V6 engine capable of 0 to 60 in 4.6 seconds. Panoramic folding roof, air scarf, climate control, Mercedes Command System, Linguatronic control system, heated seats, performance steering wheel,18 inch alloy wheels, 9 speed automatic transmission with tiptronic paddles,original handbooks in Mercedes leather wallet, Full Service History and 2 sets of keys. Low mileage at 41,800. **£29,995**

1990 ROLLS ROYCE SILVER SPIRIT II *2 OWNERS 15,000 MILES FROM NEW* Supplied to a London PLC on the 1st Jan 1990 then passed to a doctor for 29 years and used sparingly during his ownership, now covered only 15,900 miles. Finished in immaculate Royal Blue with Magnolia Hide, Dark Blue Piping, Dark Blue dash top and Dark Blue carpets. With Spare wheel and unused complete tool kit. The underside of the car is in remarkable condition and looks more like a one year old car not a 33 year old one! One of the very best you will find. **£26,995**

1975 TRIUMPH TR6 2.5 PI This immaculate fully restored UK spec CR chassis number fuel injection with overdrive example has been subject to a full restoration to its original UK spec and original colour, Magenta with black trim. It has been upgraded with far more comfortable seats and a wooden steering wheel. Comes with an extensive history file with MOTs to confirm the mileage of only 71,000 from new, the original hand book, service book, heritage certificate plus a hard top supplied from new. **£23,995**

1972 ROLLS ROYCE SILVER SHADOW 1. Finished in Sable with Beige Hide and Beige Wilton Carpets. Last owner purchased it in 1982 for his daughter's wedding and it was not used until purchased by ourselves in 2018 and stored in our personal collection. Now fully recommissioned including hydraulic brakes and suspension overhaul. Stunning looking car in its period colour. Ready for show. **£19,995**

1993 JAGUAR XJS V12 COUPE. This exceptional example was first registered to Jaguar cars Browns Lane in February of 1993 then sold to its first owner in Dec 93, the second owner purchased the car from us in 2020 and has only covered 1,000 miles during his ownership. Only 59,000 miles with 23 service stamps. Finished in immaculate Flamingo Metallic with Doeskin hide. Very hard to find in this condition. **£16,995**

1987 JAGUAR XJ6 3.6 (XJ40). Finished in immaculate old English White with unmarked Saville Grey Hide, Grey Carpets and as new Walnut Veneers. Been part of a private collection for the past 3 years. Supplied and serviced by Jaguar Main Dealers Dutton Forsham. With all original books, service book stamped by Dutton Forsham, MOT certificates, original invoice, 2 sets of keys etc. Becoming highly collectable. **£15,995**

2001 BMW Z3 SPORTS ROADSTER 2.2 *ONLY 39,900 MILES*. Finished in desirable Dakar Yellow unmarked Black leather complimented by a brushed alloy centre console. Six cylinder 2.2 injection engine coupled to a 5 speed manual gearbox. With heated electric seats, air conditioning, electric hood, expensive Alpine Audio System including Sat Nav. Last owner used sparingly over 13 years with 8 main dealers and 2 specialist stamps. Perfect example.
£13,995

2001 BMW 320Ci SE COUPE *ONLY 26,000 MILES*. Finished in immaculate Titan Silver with unmarked Black Trim. Specifications include rear park sensors, climate control, cruise control, BMW business radio cassette and CD multi changer, electronic stability control etc. Serviced and maintained by a meticulous owner. These E46 BMW Coupes are now very desirable, particularly the 6 cylinder variant. This must be one of the best of the best.
£12,995

1971 ROVER 2000 TC. Finished in Tobacco Leaf with Black Hide. This stunning example was placed into storage in 2005 and fully recommissioned in 2020. We sold the Rover 2000 TC to its second owner in 2020 who covered only 2,000 miles during his ownership, now covered an incredible 31,000 miles. Comes with a Heritage Certificate, owners manual, old MOTs and new car receipt from Lex Motor Group. Very hard to find in this condition, with low mileage and ownership a sought after everyday classic.. **£12,995**

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SCAN ME

Classified pick

Our favourite cars you can buy this month

PEUGEOT 404 COUPÉ

Year of manufacture 1967 **Recorded mileage** 12,250
Asking price SEK249,000 **Vendor** Auto Classica, Ystad, Sweden; 0046 411 66666; autoclassica.com

WHEN IT WAS NEW

Price £2214 **Max power** 84bhp **Max torque** 104lb ft
0-60mph 12.2 secs **Top speed** 104mph **Mpg** 25

Our cover feature this month proves that great sports cars are still available for relatively modest budgets. Equally, you don't always need hundreds of thousands of pounds for the handsome lines of a coachbuilt coupé from the 1960s. It's easy to forget, though, when flicking through auction catalogues containing £500k Aston Martin DB5s and £300k Ferrari 250GTEs.

Okay, this Peugeot 404 Coupé will hardly stand up to serious comparison with those superlative GTs, with a substantial horsepower deficit and far less luxury, but is it really worth less than a tenth as much? For the equivalent of £18k, this '67 Coupé has enough in its two-door design to distinguish it from the already pretty Pininfarina-styled saloon: a long nose and a rear treatment that blends raked pillars and upswept wings into elegant fins. It is still quite upright and slab-sided, but this was always meant to be a usable car.

Likewise the mechanicals. As well as losing the magnificent song of a V12 or the lusty pick-up of a big 'six', you lose the wallet-wearing maintenance and thirst. The Peugeot's oversquare 1616cc 'four' is sweet, free-revving and smooth through a four-speed 'box with full synchromesh. With fuel injection, as here, there's 84bhp for a top speed of 104mph and economy approaching 30mpg. And it will keep it up for much longer than contemporary exotica: this redoubtable engine is known to go for 120,000 miles between rebuilds.

The story gets even better, with 'our' example having just emerged from a full restoration, including a repaint in light blue metallic and a retrimmed interior. The new Elmo semi-aniline leather looks soft and inviting, and sharp metallic detailing adds glinting visual interest elsewhere – the ribbed lower door trim and angled handle in particular. Apart from the carpets and leather, much of the interior remains original and in excellent condition. The brakes are newly overhauled, too, including an uprated servo.

Nearly three million 404s were produced, including post-French-market runs in Africa and South America, but only 6837 Coupés were built – a small figure even compared with the 10,387 Cabrios. With hardly a third of these remaining, it's about as likely you'll see a 404 Coupé as one of those exotic and exclusive GT stars; but you won't be nearly as strained to keep it running. For a car at least half as handsome and many times less hassle, this 404 is more than worth its price-tag – and even the trip to Sweden to collect it.

SUMMARY

CHOSEN BY Aaron McKay
FOR Elegant Pininfarina lines; economical; fresh restoration
AGAINST Not one for show-offs, or speed demons
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
For golden-era GT-car style at a fraction of the usual cost. It should last for ever, too

Marcel Roks Consultants

Jaguar XK120 Barou Roadster, 1952.

Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint Rally, 1963.

Alpine A106 MM, 1955. MM history !

Fiat 508CS Balilla Aerodinamica, 1935.

Lamborghini Huracan Sterrato, 2024.

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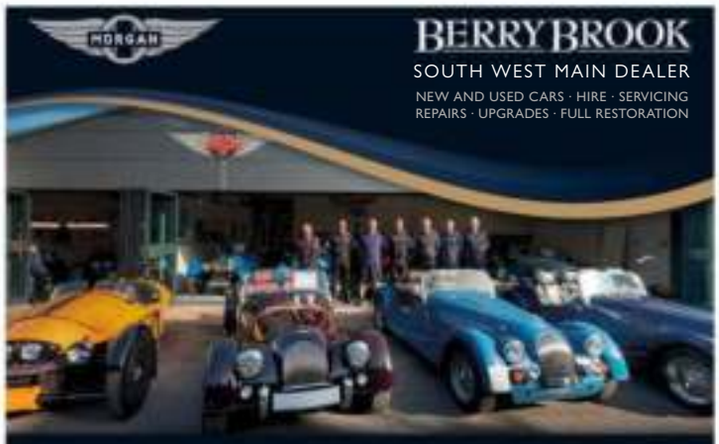

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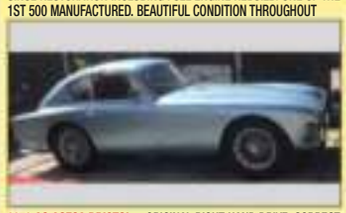

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How long have you been in business? Five decades, and we've learned a thing or two about Rolls-Royces & Bentleys in that time! Harvey established the business in 1970, then after 50 years he and his wife passed the reins over to me and my wife Gemma in 2023. Harvey's fascination for his grandfather's Rolls-Royce 20/25 led him to focus on these cars, and we cater for all R-R and Bentley models from the 1920s to the early 2000s, from service and repairs to full-scale restorations.

What's the most valuable car you've worked on? That depends on how you define value. Many cars we work on are high-value one-offs, but a number have been in the same family for 50 years and have been passed down the generations. Some of those may not be as valuable in monetary terms, but they have huge emotional value and fantastic stories.

What has been your most rewarding project? It's hard to choose, but one of our long-term projects has been a Silver Dawn we prepared for international rallying. It's not every day you get to ready a classic Rolls-Royce to drive from Peking to Paris! The car has now done several events and performed well on all terrains, and we're in the process of returning it to standard because our client has finished competing – so we will have taken it full circle.

What's the best classic you've owned? My 1986 Saab 900. It's the same age as me, and I love its styling and the fact that it can be used as a practical daily driver. I'm seeing fewer and fewer on the roads.

What's your dream classic? I've always wanted a '50s Citroën DS. They have such innovative design, technology and style – they still look futuristic 70 years on.

How's business? Really good. We are a small, family-run business with a personal feel, which I think along with our skills and experience is why clients choose us. We're meeting some lovely new customers at the moment, and still working with equally lovely existing ones whose cars we have looked after for decades. We're very lucky.

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FACTFILE
Engine 1998cc turbocharged 'four'; 255bhp @ 5500rpm; 295lb ft @ 1550rpm
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WORDS **RYAN STANDEN** PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX EDLESTON**

In 1936, Morgan unveiled its first four-wheeled vehicle, the 4-4, with a Z-section steel chassis, sliding-pillar front suspension and a leaf-sprung rear end. It morphed into the Plus 4, but the basic ingredients remained the same for the ensuing 84 years. In 2020, the overprotective Malvern parent broke with tradition and allowed its oldest offspring to indulge its rebellious streak. Boosted by a BMW turbo 'four' and catapulted into the 21st century with a bonded-aluminium tub and double wishbones all round, today's Plus Four is a thoroughly modern roadster.

The 'waterfall' grille, flowing wings and separate headlights are pure Morgan, but the latest refresh adds a restomod flavour to the venerable design. Select Sport Plus mode and it becomes a bit of a hooligan, too: the optional Dynamic Handling Pack works its magic via the adaptive dampers, and the twin exhausts snap, crackle and pop. Most buyers opt for the eight-speed auto, as here, for 0-60mph in 4.8 secs; the Plus Four's 1040kg kerbweight makes it feel faster, though. You can change gear via column-mounted paddles or the BMW-sourced lever, which doesn't look too out of place. Rein it in with Sport and Normal modes – they are better for British roads – and the antisocial exhaust concedes to an orchestra of turbo noises that are all very amusing in a '30s-style sports car.

FUTURE CLASSIC

The Morgan shines when the going turns twisty. Get accustomed to the long bonnet and you can use the tops of the wings to place the car on the apex, then feel the rear rotate and follow keenly before riding the wave of torque to the next bend. The electronic power steering is nice and light in town, but provides plenty of feedback elsewhere. The body-coloured ash frame is mostly hidden – you glimpse it under the bonnet and around the door frames – while inside is a digital detox: no big touchscreen, only a handful of buttons and a set of VDO dials.

Ultimately it's a back-to-basics experience, but the seats are comfortable and you could happily sit back and reel off the miles on a long-distance road trip. You'll have to pack light, though, because unless you add a luggage rack, space is limited to the slender area behind the seats and the passenger-side glovebox.

Sure, there are more conventional rivals that offer more kit (a six-cylinder Porsche Cayman costs the same) and, ultimately, will be easier to live with while providing similar thrills. But on a sunny day, on the right road, you'll struggle to find anything to better the Plus Four, whose latest update has created a credible alternative to the usual sports-car suspects without losing its old-school sparkle. Could a Morgan in the Cotswolds be the UK's answer to a Ford Mustang on Route 66? Quite possibly, yes.

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